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Monday, 23 April 2018, 10.10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Meza-Cuadra/Mr. Tenya	(Peru)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Wu Haitao
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Dah
	Equatorial Guinea	Mrs. Mele Colifa
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Umarov
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Poland	Mr. Czaputowicz
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Ms. Eckels-Currie

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Youth, peace and security

Identical letters dated 2 March 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (S/2018/86)

Letter dated 6 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/324)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Youth, peace and security

Identical letters dated 2 March 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (see S/2018/86)

Letter dated 6 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2018/324)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Guatemala, Iceland, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Maldives, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Portugal, Qatar, Slovakia, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Yemen to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; Mr. Graeme Simpson, lead author of the progress study on youth, peace and security; Ms. Sophia Pierre-Antoine, Member of the Advisory Council of the World Young Women Christian Association; and Ms. Kessy Ekomo-Soignet, Executive Director of the Organisation URU, Central African Republic.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I also invite the following to participate in this meeting: His Excellency Mr. Dan Neculăescu, State Secretary for Regional Affairs and Multilateral Global Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania, in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission; His Excellency Mr. Christian Leffler, Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Social Issues, European External Action Service of the European Union; Her Excellency Ms. Fatima Kyari Mohammed, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/86, which contains the text of identical letters dated 2 March 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council.

I also wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/324, which contains the text of a letter dated 6 April 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I now give the floor to Ms. Wickramanayake.

Ms. Wickramanayake: "One day I will become President and I will bring a law that will stop people from fighting and stop using guns and bombs", my best friend told me when we were in sixth grade. Unlike most sixth graders around the world, we were not having that conversation in a classroom or a playground. Instead, we were whispering into each other's ears in a safety bunker in the corner of our school grounds. There were bombings and suicide attacks in the capital of Sri Lanka, Colombo, and running to the safety bunker was a regular activity during our school days.

Many years later, as the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, I had an opportunity to meet and hold hands with hundreds of young people in conflict-affected areas around the world and share their heart-wrenching stories. But the difference was that some of them — without waiting to be President and without resources or institutional support — were already leading exceptional peacebuilding initiatives in their communities, schools, townships and even refugee camps. Today we celebrate those fearless young peacebuilders.

Allow me to thank the Government of Peru for its leadership in convening this historic open debate. Around this table today, in addition to Government representatives, we are three young people — young

women — about to brief the Security Council, which I believe is a first in the history of the Council and a fair reflection of how young people, especially young women, are turning tables and leading change on the ground.

I would like to thank Mr. Graeme Simpson, independent lead author of the progress study on youth, peace and security, appointed by the Secretary-General, as well as the Expert Advisory Group for its support extended to guide Mr. Simpson's work. I would also like to acknowledge the work of the United Nations Population Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, which acted as secretariat for that independent report, as well as the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations agencies for co-convening regional consultations with young people and the numerous partners from civil society and others.

It is not every day that the Security Council has an opportunity to gather around an independent report carrying the voices of over 4,000 young people from all regions of the world, who represented the aspirations of millions more. It was one of the most participatory processes ever undertaken with the United Nations support. Those young people entrusted us to carry to the Security Council their hopes and unfiltered perspectives for a more peaceful world. Today we will hear directly from two of them: Kessy Ekomo-Soignet from the Central African Republic and Sophia Pierre-Antoine from Haiti.

The date of 23 April marks exactly three years since the Security Council convened its second-ever meeting (see S/PV.7432) on the role of youth in promoting peace, which was presided over by the youngest-ever Council President, the then-21-year-old Crown Prince of Jordan. The meeting recognized that young people drive change but they are not in the driver's seat and called for giving them the license to help steer our common future. Thousands of young people rallied behind that call by using their exceptional communication and networking skills to mobilize behind a common cause. They challenged and rejected the false narratives labelling them as a threat to peace and stability in society. The Security Council responded by adopting resolution 2250 (2015). That resolution offers a beacon of hope to countless young women and men risking their lives to address conflict, violent extremism and the need for peace. From Cameroon to Myanmar, from Kyrgyzstan to Guatemala, young people use the resolution to engage their Governments and support their work.

A little more than two years after the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015), much has happened already. Coalitions on youth, peace and security have been formed in a number of countries. Dedicated programmes, with young people at their heart, are being designed. Civil society partners have mobilized to support the work led by young people. United Nations country teams have experimented with ambitious programmes. Donors are rethinking their funding streams. Now we have the progress study, which gives us unique insights on how young people see and experience the world we live in, their hopes for peace and security and their demands of Governments and the multilateral system. It echoes what I have heard from young people around the world.

This all points to two key issues that need immediate attention: the growing mistrust among young generations towards formal political institutions and the exclusion of young people from political, civic and economic life. Allow me to highlight a number of key takeaways.

The progress study is a critical contribution to the discussions on building and sustaining peace. This debate, on the eve of the high-level meeting on sustaining peace to be convened by the President of the General Assembly, shows that we are starting to see young people as the missing peace. That is directly related to the Secretary-General's priority of preventing conflict and violence. The youth, peace and security agenda is at the intersection of Agenda 2030 and its ambitious Goals. It is at the very nexus of peace and security, development and human rights. It also is a critical complement to the women and peace and security agenda and the children and armed conflict agenda.

The progress study give us pointers that can inform Member States' ongoing thinking about the reform of the United Nations and points towards new systems of accountability, the engagement of civil society and young people. The study offers us a new narrative on the role of young people. It recognizes that only a small minority of young people ever engages in violence, and it warns against policy panic triggered by unfounded assumptions that youth are violent.

This agenda is about transforming systems that lead to the exclusion of young people, shifting how they are engaged and protecting their human rights. The complex nature of peacebuilding and conflict prevention requires us to tap into the potential and

creativity of young people. As Secretary-General Guterres said,

> "If we are serious about prevention, and particularly about preventing conflict, we need to be serious about engaging with and investing in young women and men."

I believe we all can agree that my generation represents promise, not peril. We should be seen as an asset, not a problem. The Security Council has a unique opportunity to redress the mistrust between young people, their Governments and the multilateral system by opening new paths for meaningful participation and contribution. The study offers many concrete, tangible recommendations that I hope the Council will take forward. As I see it, there are three main ways to do this.

The first is by supporting the peacebuilding work of young people: recognize it, fund it, scale it up, protect it. I will not ask delegations to let young people lead, because they are already leading, but they need inclusive, safe spaces and enabling environments to succeed. Countless young people are building and sustaining peace in their countries. We see this in the United Network of Young Peacebuilders and many other organizations. Their numbers are much bigger than that of their peers who have fallen prey to extremist groups.

Yet those young peacebuilders rarely make the headlines of local and international news, and they definitely do not boast of the same level of financial resources and freedom of mobility as those on the other extreme. Many had difficulties in obtaining travel permits to be with us in the Chamber today and used innovative means, such as crowdfunding and space-sharing to get here. Those young people deserve more investments and more news headlines. I invite all young people in the Chamber to raise their hands so that we can recognize their presence and show solidarity to those who could not be with us today in person.

Secondly, we can prioritize political participation for young people to be fully engaged. That includes ensuring that young people have a space at the peace table, that their voices are heard as peace is negotiated for Syria, South Sudan, Colombia, Yemen, Myanmar and beyond. On peacebuilding strategies and action plans, young people must be key stakeholders, not mere recipients of directions. Young people should feel that their vote counts and should be engaged in electoral processes and political party structures, and not be considered too young to run for public office. Countries must remove all age restrictions that limit young people's political participation.

Lastly, we can partner. Today's open debate should be an important building block to continue our collective efforts to promote young peacebuilders. I have personally met young people in Iraq, Somalia and Colombia who spoke about how resolution 2250 (2015) is helping to close the trust deficit between young people and the international community. We need to build on that momentum. In that connection, I welcome the efforts of Peru and Sweden to further strengthen the youth, peace and security agenda by way of a follow-up draft resolution to this debate. I sincerely hope the members of the Council will offer support that opens a path for regular Council discussions on this critical issue.

The diversity in the Chamber today is a testament to how multiple partners from different organizational standpoints can come together to advance progress. That is what the courageous and important work of young people engaged in peacebuilding demands and deserves. What history books will write about representatives here today, and what their children and grandchildren will read about them, will depend upon what decisions they make today. I sincerely hope that they decide that youth is no longer a subsidiary agenda, but the most important agenda for the Council and for the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Wickramanayake for her very informative briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Simpson.

Mr. Simpson: It is an extraordinary honour to be able to address the Security Council today. I am very grateful to the Ambassador of Peru for hosting this open debate. I am especially privileged to brief the Council alongside three remarkable young women from three continents. The Council has set an important precedent today: young women acting, leading and speaking truth to power to help shape a more peaceful and secure future.

Being appointed by the Secretary-General has been a once-in-a-lifetime privilege, especially with a mandate to document the positive contributions that young people around the world are making to building and sustaining peace, resolving conflict and preventing violence. I must also thank the 21 expert advisers appointed by the Secretary-General to support my study,

and make the point that at least half of them are young themselves, as well as the institutional members of the Steering Committee that have overseen the process.

From the very outset, it was evident that addressing the exclusion and marginalization of 1.8 billion young people globally was at the heart of the progress study on youth, peace and security. Nearly a quarter of those young people — at least 408 million — are living in situations where they are exposed to violence. In undertaking this study, it was clear that we could not afford to make the mistake of reproducing the very problem of exclusion that we were attempting to solve. We therefore designed an inclusive, participatory approach, which was indispensable to the legitimacy of the study and its findings. We conducted seven regional youth consultations and supplemented those with national and online consultations, country-specific research in 27 countries, numerous thematic studies and surveys of youth-led peacebuilding organizations, Member States and United Nations entities. To ensure that we heard from young people who would not normally have a voice in this type of global policy process, we also facilitated 281 focus groups in 44 countries around the world. We listened to over 4,200 young people around the globe. A core message they conveyed is that there is a growing trust gap between young people and their Governments, multilateral organizations and even international civil society organizations. That is a challenge that must be embraced, not fended off. It reflects a trust deficit that we have to bridge.

The young people whom we consulted also understood that they are not trusted by their Governments and leaders. Instead, they are treated as a problem to be solved, or worse still, as a threat. As one young man said to us, "Society gives you an eternal tattoo, a label of an offender, a failure, or a source of problems". The stereotypical youth is represented as a young man with a gun, while young women are inevitably consigned to the status of passive victims. Those gendered stereotypes associate all young people with the risks of violence. In so doing, they deprive them of their voice, agency and leadership as the drivers of change and innovators for peace.

Those stereotypes have led to some misleading policy assumptions. The first among them is that bulging youth populations necessarily produce an increased risk of violent conflict. The second assumes that young refugees or youth migration present new threats of terrorist infiltration and violent crime. The third assumption is that most young people are susceptible to recruitment into violent extremist groups. There is little to no evidence to support such policy panic, but the result has still been disproportionate investment in hard-fisted security measures that address the consequences and not the causes of violent conflict. The impact or the cost-effectiveness of those measures is seldom if ever properly evaluated.

The reality is that the vast majority of young people are not involved in violence. We should not romanticize that. Most young people are just getting on with their lives, but many others are exercising great courage, creativity and resilience in working for peace and security — usually voluntarily, and often under hazardous conditions. Yet that resourcefulness remains largely unappreciated as a universal social asset, and is consequently severely undersupported.

But the study paints a picture of how young people are undertaking peace work in virtually every society across the globe. They are working across all the phases of peace and conflict cycles, including early interventions to prevent the outbreak of violence in relatively peaceful societies, as well as working to prevent the continuation or the escalation of violence in situations of ongoing conflict. They have a key role to play at the table in formal peace processes and also in consolidating peace and preventing the recurrence of conflict through dialogue, post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.

Young men and women contribute to social cohesion by building peace from the most local level, in their families and communities, to national, regional and international levels. They are working across different kinds of conflict and with different types of violence, including violent crime, gender-based violence, political violence and terrorism. They are expanding their reach through innovative partnerships with local Government, civil society and civic and women's organizations, and building regional and global networks. Furthermore, they are forging new pathways and spaces through art, culture, sports and especially through the creative occupation of cyberspace, social media and the development of new technologies for peace. Finally, young people continue to contribute to meaningful change through their peaceful dissent and protest, seeking justice, challenging corruption, demanding freedom of movement and expression and protesting gun violence.

Through that work on peace and security, there is an alternative opportunity for Member States and international actors to invest in the upside: young people's resilient commitment to peace. To do that effectively, it is necessary to move from exclusion to the meaningful inclusion of young people. It is ultimately only through countering the violence of exclusion that we can prevent the violence of extremism in all its forms.

For the inclusion of youth to be meaningful, it must be comprehensive. That requires that politics be genuinely inclusive of young women and men in representative political and policy forums that shape their lives and define their interactions with the State, as well as having youth at the table when peace is being negotiated or reconciliation and reconstruction are being planned. It demands the full economic inclusion of youth, beyond just jobs, in the development of their communities and societies, through all of the Sustainable Development Goals. It is imperative that we fully protect young people from direct violence and its traumatic effects, but we also must protect the spaces, human rights and the enabling environment necessary for their peace work, including their peaceful dissent and protest.

It is essential to recognize the unique experiences of young women, and also the importance of cultivating positive versions of masculine identity that do not depend on control and power over women or violence. It means not only investing in education for peace and prioritizing the protection of places of learning as safe spaces and hubs of social cohesion, but also responding to young people's demands for peace education as a crucial tool in building and sustaining peace and preventing violence. It necessitates the leadership and facilitation of young people in the disengagement and reintegration of former fighters and those who have been drawn into violent underworlds.

The interests of young people and the work they do naturally traverse the pillars of peace, development and human rights, and they make it clear that protection and prevention are inseparable. The comprehensive inclusion of young people, coupled with the necessary investment in their ownership and leadership, is indispensable to building and sustaining peace. That is what it takes to translate the demographic dividend of youthful populations into an effective peace dividend for the entire globe — for all societies, and not just those riven by violent conflict.

Seizing that opportunity will require some major shifts and a bold reorientation. It demands that Member States and the multilateral system move from remedial responses to genuine prevention approaches. That reorientation requires a significant shift from investing in hard security based on risk to investing in youth-led peace work based on resilience. It requires a commitment to new partnerships, particularly with civil society organizations and especially those that are youth-led and youth-focused. It also necessitates a new culture and societal norms that do not demonize, romanticize or, worse still, patronize youth, but rather demand accountability and provide the preventive incentive required for the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015).

The study provides a series of recommendations that offer stepping stones towards those changes. It does so in three broad areas.

First, there is a set of proposals for investing in the capacities, agency and leadership of youth, including funding mechanisms, facilitating and protecting an enabling environment for youth peace work, and producing age- and gender-disaggregated data so that we can properly assess progress. Secondly, it includes concrete proposals for how to expand the meaningful inclusion in each of the political, economic and sociocultural spheres that I outlined earlier. Thirdly and finally, it offers recommendations for building national, regional and global partnerships and collaborations through youth, peace and security coalitions at the national level; developing dialogue and consultation platforms for young people inside and outside the United Nations; establishing advisory boards and youth advisory councils at the country and regional levels; and utilizing regular reporting mechanisms on progress to the Council.

In conclusion, I must finally express my appreciation for the commitment of the young people around the globe who suspended their disbelief, trusted that we would listen and spoke candidly. I promised them that in what I wrote and presented here, they would be able to see themselves and hear their voices. That is "the missing peace" in our world. The question is not whether we address that, it is only about how.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Simpson for his very informative briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Pierre-Antoine.

Ms. Pierre-Antoine: I am deeply thankful to His Excellency Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra of Peru for inviting me to speak before the Security Council today during this important debate on youth, peace, and security.

My name is Sophia Pierre-Antoine. I was born in Haiti in 1991, as a coup d'état was unfolding. I was a teenager when the next coup took place, in 2004. Like many young women and men of my generation, my childhood and adolescence were marked by periods of violence and political instability. Many might be quick to think that such challenging circumstances made my fellow young Haitians frustrated, exasperated, violent or helpless victims. Yet we are the ones leading a daily struggle to ensure security in our streets, peace in our homes and justice in our communities.

Following the 2010 earthquake, which killed hundreds of thousands of people and displaced over 1 million others, the World Young Women Christian Association of Haiti, a locally led feminist non-governmental organization for and by young women, was quick to offer psychosocial support in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. During one of the group therapy sessions in an area prone to conflict among rival gangs, a young girl shared the fact that she was not afraid of another earthquake, but afraid of older men coming into her tent at night. Those girls were also afraid of the ones who were supposed to provide aid but in the end contributed to more abuse.

For years, young women organized discussion groups and workshops to change attitudes and gender norms that contribute to the high rates of violence and impunity within IDP camps and neighbouring communities. In the process, they became community leaders and role models for younger girls to look up to. That is a testament to the importance of adapting peacebuilding work to a feminist and age-appropriate framework. Effectively addressing the concerns of young women and girls, including trauma healing, empowers and fosters leadership skills. The narrative of young women as powerless victims must be changed.

The rule of law was often not present in communities with which I worked. Local Government and police were either absent, overwhelmed or complicit. Young men organized themselves and formed patrol groups to block gangs from entering their communities. Because of gender stereotypes, it would be easy to see those young men as loitering or violent youth, when in fact they were only trying to protect their loved ones. Cultures that do not allow men to express their feelings and that offer only violent role models foster an atmosphere in which unhealthy and oppressive behaviours are normalized and rewarded. That type of toxic masculinity creates situations that fuel insecurity in the home and streets and, ultimately, for the entire community. The narrative of young men as perpetrators of violence must be changed.

I am here before the Council today to talk about the gender aspect of youth, peace, and security. I urge everyone to recognize that transforming cities, public spaces and homes into safe spaces for young women and transgender youth is a human right. That is what we are striving to achieve with the progress study. I was privileged to be part of the consultations organized within the framework of the progress study for the Latin American and Caribbean region and at the global level. I witnessed the passion and drive of young peacebuilders globally. Discussing the topic of peace and security is not easy and has led to deeply challenging, but also profoundly honest, conversations. Although we shared our experiences, failures and setbacks, we mainly shared our lessons learned and victories. We were provided with an appropriate platform and a caring ear, and were therefore able to discuss openly. As a result, behind each of the recommendations of the progress study are multiple testimonies of pain, loss and disillusion, but also stories of courage, hope and success.

Such inclusive platforms enabling young women and men to take part in peace and security discussions are rare. I hope that Member States can replicate that inclusive participatory methodology so as to further support the work of young peacebuilders in their countries. All of us — the young people who participated in the progress study — are very clear that we do not want more weaponized forces that terrorize the poor, the indigenous, the racial and ethnic minorities, those with disabilities and illnesses and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth. Much money is spent on military action globally, when it could be spent on advancing the Sustainable Development Goals. Instead, young people called for investment in positive, peaceful and practical solutions. On behalf of all of us, in particular on behalf of my fellow young women peacebuilders, we expect the following of the Security Council.

First, we ask for investment in and support for young women, men and transgender youth fighting

racism, xenophobia, religious intolerance, homophobia, transphobia, sexism and discrimination directed against people with disabilities. That is indispensable to rethink the power relations that are breaking down our societies and contributing to extremism and terrorism.

Secondly, we ask for advocating for meaningful inclusion by recognizing the strength in the multiple identities of young people. The participation of diverse youth at all levels will ensure that our race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnic background and ability are not a systematic source of exclusion, discrimination or being made invisible.

Thirdly, we ask that the Council work to ensure that age and gender are always an integral part of peace and security discussions. Almost 20 years ago, women and men came together around resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security. Now people of all ages are coming together around resolution 2250 (2015) to ensure the inclusion of younger generations. That is crucial to incorporating young women in all formal conflict assessments, peacebuilding programming and security processes, as well as recognizing, supporting and ensuring the protection and safety of young peacebuilders and human rights defenders.

Globally, we young people have achieved incredible milestones and contributed to peace and security efforts with very limited support and resources. Imagine what we could do if we had access to additional data and flexible funding and how we could contribute to policies and projects if we held more positions in Governments and United Nations agencies and leadership roles in the public and private sectors. It is by supporting our initiatives and movements, fostering partnerships, strengthening meaningful, diverse and inclusive participation, and ensuring the protection of young women and men and transgender youth that sustainable peace can become a reality.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Pierre-Antoine for her very informative briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Ekomo-Soignet.

Ms. Ekomo-Soignet (*spoke in French*): I thank His Excellency Ambassador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra of Peru for having invited me to participate in this debate on youth, peace and security.

Beyond this debate, I believe now is a key moment for reaffirming the place and role of youth in building a better world. I am from the Central African Republic — a country in which 72 per cent of the population is under the age of 35 and which, sadly, is known as one of the poorest and most dangerous nations in the world, and one of the worst in which to be young. As we all know, our position in such international rankings is not a death sentence. Currently, together with many other young people from other countries with whom we share last place in those rankings, we are aware that this is merely part of the story. In that widely disseminated version of the story, we often wear the label of persecutor, victim or of the mere recipient of aid.

The other part of the story concerning us — the youth of the Central African Republic — lies elsewhere, and we are vividly writing it today. It is the story of our acknowledged role as women and men in peacebuilding, peacekeeping, our families, communities, countries, continents and the world. Many of us are working tirelessly to prevent and end violence, silence the weapons, promote dialogue and social cohesion and foster our own blossoming through actions we are taking within our organizations and in other meeting places. It was my honour and fortune to work every day with my peers in the Central African Republic, and I had an opportunity to work with many young people from various countries in the context of the study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86) carried out after the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015).

I wish to stress that, for many young people, the resolution and the study are much more than documents. They are key strategic tools that allow us to forge new relations with our authorities and with the United Nations system. It is true that there has been a shift in recent years on the representation of young people in forums on peace and security at the local, national, regional and global levels. But does that signal their true participation at all levels? Can we be sure that our contributions, our needs, our aspirations will be effectively taken into account in the final decisions and recommendations?

Our representation must not be merely symbolic. It must not be limited to public launchings and demonstrations. Unfortunately, in many of our countries, there are still attempts to validate the representation of our youth as a favour to them. The consequences of that favour, without real vision or collaboration with young people, are not generally felt immediately, but rather in the long term, widening the gap between the youth and the State.

For a long time, youth in the Central African Republic have not been taken into account in the various attempts at conflict resolution. It is only recently that the work carried out by our youth, alongside their peers, to prevent violence, combat rumours and strengthen social cohesion has started to be highlighted. We see new willingness among Government partners, the United Nations Mission and United Nations agencies to commit to working with us. And we are proud of that. We move forward with the feeling that we are helping our country. We are making our contribution.

I come before the Security Council today to launch an appeal to partnership. The Council is no longer alone. We are here, at its side, to build the peace we all strive for. That partnership will not be possible unless we agree to move beyond our prejudices and stereotypes, unless we agree to work together constructively and effectively and move past our eloquent speeches. We must take action now.

The partnership will take various forms and will require strategic choices and substantial, crucial financing. We are counting on the Security Council and all Member States to adopt and implement quotas in order to ensure the direct participation of young people, with equal representation of the sexes at all stages of the formal processes for peaceful political transition. That must start with the negotiations preceding the implementation stage, in the framework of a national dialogue, in the drafting of a constitution and of a transitional justice mechanism, or in any other political process related to peace and security. Those mechanisms should enable enhanced exchanges among young people from all walks of life, focusing more specifically on ensuring the participation of young women, and should guarantee that the necessary financing and security measures are in place.

We also call on our Governments to institutionalize measures to bridge the gap between young people and local and national representatives in institutions and mechanisms for governance by creating youth advisory committees and by facilitating the participation of young people in elective tenures by aligning the age of eligibility with the voting age. We call upon States to invest in the establishment of protected local spaces where civic dialogue can take place and where young people identify together priority actions for their communities in the areas of peacebuilding and development, and participate in decisions regarding the allocation of financial resources. We call for the integration of young people with local representatives in order to evaluate their economic needs before any measures are drafted, and in the planning, implementation and monitoring of youth employment programmes. Such programmes must target the most disenfranchised young people in order to ensure that they are the primary beneficiaries of such employment initiatives and to avoid exclusive access by the elite, which would only accentuate inequality.

Finally, we call for the preservation of the rule of law, particularly by protecting young people from being arrested and arbitrarily detained, putting an end to impunity and ensuring that the principles of access to justice and accountability are enforced even-handedly. Young men and women must be the preferred discussion partners in the context of the creation and implementation of security and criminal justice reforms.

The year 2025 will mark the tenth anniversary of resolution 2250 (2015). We expect an investment of $1 per young person by then — that is, $1.8 billion to support the commitment to youth and peace and security. Let us meet that challenge to make those aspirations a reality.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Ms. Ekomo-Soignet for her very informative briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Poland.

Mr. Czaputowicz (Poland): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and the Republic of Peru for convening today's meeting, as well as to congratulate you on your presidency. I also thank the briefers for their excellent presentations and commendable work in preparation for today's meeting.

Poland welcomes the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86), which will help shape a forward-looking strategy for the implementation of the resolution 2250 (2015). We appreciate this all-encompassing document, which touches upon the most crucial issues affecting the young generation. We would favour an annual implementation report by the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security, as well as yearly Security Council open debates on this issue.

Youth empowerment and participation are indispensable to enhancing the inclusivity and equality of our societies. Young people are the cornerstone of

sustainable development and lasting peace. They need not only quality education, vocational training, skills development and access to digital technologies and services, but also employment and entrepreneurial opportunities. The most constructive way to empower young people and ensure that they will not be radicalized is to offer them credible and constructive ways to positively contribute to their communities. If youth remain excluded from national and international peacebuilding efforts, then instability and extremism will continue to pose serious threats to our societies.

First of all, we should provide youth around the world with a wide range of educational opportunities as a key element of development and life improvement. The international community must mobilize resources to improve the learning prospects of young people and to support inclusive labour policies. Those goals are also an important part of Poland's foreign policy. We believe that, in order to make lasting change in the world, we need to act at the source of the problems.

I recently visited Rwanda, on the occasion of granting the Raphael Lemkin International Award in Kigali. I was also in Kibeho, a town in the southern part of the country, where I visited the Educational Institute for Blind Children, led by the Polish Franciscan Sisters Servants of the Cross and funded by the Polish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Institute, which is the only educational facility for blind children in Rwanda, provides its students not only with basic education, but also with vocational training, thereby preparing them to enter the labour market. It contributes to a change in attitude on the part of the Rwandan society towards blind children. That unique project is an excellent example of an inclusive and comprehensive approach to development, which we promote as part of our foreign policy.

There are examples of such an approach in other countries as well. In Lebanon, for instance, together with our German partners, we implemented a project to rehabilitate public schools for children of both refugees and the local community. In Jordan and Lebanon, we are providing informal education to young Syrian refugees, who are often excluded from the national educational system.

Resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, was a valuable step in recognizing the needs and the potential of youth in the prevention and resolution of conflict. It reaffirmed the important role that youth can play in enhancing sustainability and inclusiveness, as well as in the success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

We need to acknowledge the different prospects of young people worldwide in the employment, education, health-care, civic and political spheres. Based on Poland's experience, young people are deeply committed to engaging in non-governmental activities, and they contribute significantly to the culture of peace at various levels in various areas.

In the 1980s, the Solidarity movement contributed greatly to the peaceful transition to democracy in Poland and in countries of the whole region. As a phenomenon that combined a trade union, a social movement and an aspiration for freedom and respect for human rights, Solidarity was a non-violent struggle against the authoritarian Communist regime. Youth played a prominent role in that struggle.

Pope John Paul II strongly supported Polish society in its uphill struggle for democracy. His close ties with young people are also well known. On the celebration of World Day of Peace in 1985, Pope John Paul II stated in his message that young people must not be satisfied with an instinctive desire for peace, and that desire must be transformed into a firm moral conviction that encompasses the full range of human problems and builds on deeply treasured values.

Poland strongly supports the engagement of young people in democratic processes, as it increases their visibility and political participation. At the same time, young people remain highly vulnerable. Therefore, all efforts are needed to strengthen their protection and to address their particular needs. Young people are recognized as agents of change, entrusted to fulfil their own potential and to build a world fit for future generations.

Poland supports strategies and programmes that promote youth-led initiatives fostering intergenerational dialogue, tolerance and reconciliation. In 2016, young people from all over the world came to the city of Kraków in Poland to meet Pope Francis and to celebrate World Youth Day. Those 1.6 million young people brought with them a spirit of peace, solidarity and friendliness. We should act together in a similar way to address all symptoms of violence and to ensure that there is less and less racial, ethnic and religious prejudice.

The youth of any region of the world need a positive environment so as to develop their potential. Poland welcomes the proposals included in the progress study on youth, peace and security. We agree that it is indispensable to make more efforts to allow young people to fully benefit from their rights and to provide them with a voice, helping them to become active and responsible citizens. We also agree that increasing the economic and educational opportunities for all young people is pivotal, as that in turn helps to build more peaceful and equal societies.

I shall conclude by underlining the primary role and responsibility of national Governments in the process of youth empowerment as part of efforts to maintain peace and security. If we are serious about ensuring a better life for our families and for future generations, there is simply no alternative to investing in young people, giving them a voice in all relevant decision-making processes and building solid partnerships with youth as a bridge to a more peaceful, sustainable and prosperous world.

Mr. Umarov (Kazakhstan): I commend the delegation of Peru for highlighting the important and positive role of youth in maintaining international peace and security. I also thank Ms. Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; Mr. Simpson, lead author of the progress study on youth, peace and security; and civil society representatives Ms. Pierre-Antoine and Ms. Ekomo-Soignet for their comprehensive briefings on the progress made in the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security.

Today's youth comprise 1.8 billion people, nearly 500 million of whom live in conflict-affected areas. Resolution 2250 (2015) is the first effort of its kind and the only global policy instrument to go beyond the traditional approaches defined by the involvement of youth in peace and security as a securitization measure and to recognize and promote the potential of youth inclusion in issues of peace and security.

The resolution serves as a critical step forward. However, in itself it cannot ensure that youth are continuously and meaningfully engaged in issues of peace and security. While there are many youth-led initiatives operating around the world to bring about sustainable peace, there is a lack of support from the national authorities. It is the responsibility of Member States to implement resolution 2250 (2015) and to set up mechanisms that would ensure the inclusion and meaningful participation of youth in meeting today's challenges.

We therefore endorse the findings and recommendations of the progress study, which outlines a three-fold strategy to shift to a new paradigm of youth, peace and security. We also support the initiative of Peru and Sweden to adopt a new draft resolution on youth, peace and security that will contribute to the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015) across the world, as well as broadening youth participation in the work of the United Nations.

Youth do not play one, single role in conflict situations. As a vulnerable sector of society, they require mechanisms that are able to protect them from violent conflict and to prevent their radicalization. Beyond that, young people are positive agents of change, building sustainable peace in their societies. We believe that they should play an important role in fulfilling the new agenda for peace, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other global processes.

To utilize the tremendous potential of youth in creating and maintaining peaceful environments, they must be provided the opportunities to be involved in decision-making at all levels, in mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict and in peace negotiations. It is particularly important to engage youth in constructive activities to assist processes of democratization, elections, building State institutions, enforcing the rule of law, fighting corruption, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Of equal importance are sustainable and predictable investments in youth-centred development. We therefore support the recommendation of the progress study to allocate $1.8 billion by 2025 for the tenth anniversary of resolution 2250 (2015).

We believe that the international community needs to work together in order to develop a comprehensive global framework related to youth with a whole-of-pillar approach, which above all will ensure the security-development nexus and promote the vision of a more effective, transparent and accountable United Nations, at Headquarters and on the ground, delivering as One United Nations. We therefore call for coordinated and comprehensive efforts at the grassroots, national, regional and global levels.

I wish to share the experience of my country. Kazakhstan has made considerable progress across

all five main components of resolution 2250 (2015), with a focus on participation, partnership and prevention measures. First of all, we are constantly increasing inclusive representation for youth at all levels of decision-making. We also support our youth by creating an atmosphere conducive to inclusion and social cohesion, including through establishing and strengthening partnerships with relevant youth organizations. As far back as 2002, we created the Youth Congress, which is made up of active youth movements and organizations that shape youth policy directives.

Kazakhstan also strongly focuses on prevention by eradicating poverty, creating employment and educating youth — women in particular — as well as by supporting their dynamic ideas and aspirations. That is perhaps the kind of support that young men and women need the most. Our country has adopted a comprehensive set of policies to provide free education, vocational training, intensive job creation and entrepreneurship. Kazakhstan's Bolashak Scholarship — meaning Future Generation Scholarship — was launched in 1993 and gives more than 4,000 Kazakh young men and women an opportunity annually to study in leading foreign higher education institutions. It has been recognized among the best academic mobility programmes in the world. Those who finished the scholarship programme today occupy ministerial and other influential positions in society.

We also dissuade youth from using violence that serves extremist causes by implementing comprehensive development programmes. In particular, we have successfully completed the national programme on countering religious extremism and terrorism for the period 2013-2017, having allocated approximately $600 million for preventive measures for the entire youth population. As a nation of 130 ethnic groups and 16 major religions, Kazakhstan enjoys peace and stability since our thrust has been to make tolerance and respect our guiding principles. Youth vulnerability and their strengths will be the focus of the sixth triennial Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, to be held in Astana in October.

Last month, the President of Kazakhstan addressed the nation with his message of the Five Social Initiatives. They include a significant increase in educational grants and teachers' salaries, a reduction of tax to 1 per cent for low-paid workers, new opportunities to purchase housing and the construction of student hostels. Those visionary measures are aimed at implementing our Kazakhstan 2050 national strategy, by which we strive to be ranked among the top 30 developed countries of the world, and wherein youth will be our richest national resource.

We are focusing on prevention measures in Afghanistan as part of our efforts to advance a re-framed regional approach. Since 2010, we have been implementing a $50 million scholarship programme with a view to educating 1,000 Afghan students in Kazakhstan's educational institutions.

Of course, we could do more, and we need to do more. Today's briefers made a very passionate and convincing case for all of us to act swiftly and meaningfully to empower youth. In conclusion, I would like to assure the Council of Kazakhstan's readiness to join the multilateral action to transform the lives of our youth globally with a view to their becoming responsible leaders in the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate. I would also like to thank all of the briefers for their important contributions at the beginning of this meeting.

The topic of our debate today is of special importance for two main reasons. First, it is because this is the first time this item has been included on the agenda of the Security Council since the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security. Secondly, it is because we firmly believe that participation in the development of young people in any society is closely related to the development, progress and prosperity of peoples and countries. The Council unanimously adopted resolution 2250 (2015) on 9 December 2015. It was the first resolution to directly highlight the important and positive role played by young women and men in maintaining international peace and security. Over the past two years, many of the parties concerned, including the United Nations, Member States and civil society organizations and, most important, young people themselves, have translated this historic resolution into specific steps and actions.

I would like to commend the recently published progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86), as well as the recommendations included therein, which refer to the participation of young women and men in peacebuilding and which include practical guidelines for working together with young

people in new and innovative ways. I want to highlight three aspects in today's debate. The first covers the challenges hampering the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda. The second pertains to positive examples of the implementation of this agenda. And the third relates to steps that should be undertaken in order to guarantee the implementation of the agenda.

With respect to the first aspect, many young people around the world, especially those living in developing countries or in countries affected by conflict, are struggling for access to the most basic needs, including education, jobs and health services, as well as to exercise their civil liberties and political participation. Without those essential needs being met, young people cannot prosper, grow or participate fully in the development of their societies.

In the Arab world, for example, the unemployment rate among youth has reached 30 per cent. It is the highest rate of unemployment in the world as a result of being unable to translate progress in education into decent jobs for young people, beside the fast demographic growth which limits the benefits of demographic dividends and fuels more social and economic tensions in the region. There are also the negative stereotypes associated with young people that hamper their participation in and contribution to security and peacebuilding, especially the stereotypes that associate them with violent phenomena.

Conflicts are spreading throughout the world. That is another obstacle to the participation and the contribution of young people to safeguard and strengthen peace and security. The Arab region has regrettably experienced the most terrible conflicts, and many of its young people face an enormous number of obstacles and have no way of seeing their ambitions fulfilled. Those conflicts have destroyed their dreams and future. Unemployment has increased their despair and insecurity. Poverty has stolen their legitimate right to a decent life. Terrorism and extremism have taken their innocence hostage. Those are serious threats to the future and sustained development of countries. We must therefore tackle the root causes of conflict.

Concerning the second aspect, the study points out many positive examples of contributions to peace made by young people around the world. We in the State of Kuwait are aware of the importance of youth and their central role in building the Kuwait of the future. We therefore established a State ministry for youth affairs in 2013, which enables young people to improve and develop their skills so they can contribute effectively to society, while disseminating the concepts of peace and tolerance. The State of Kuwait was named the capital for Arab youth 2017, with the slogan "The Youth Are Here".

The third aspect pertains to the steps that need to be taken in order to implement the youth, peace and security agenda. We fully agree with what was mentioned in the progress study prepared by Mr. Simpson, namely, that young people are the central pillar of developing and building societies, and a key element in achieving security and peace. Any Government that ignores the development of youth in its society is losing the fundamental missing piece, and disabling security and peace.

Moreover, we would like to stress the importance of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and perceiving its principles as fundamental factors for the sustainability of peace and security. That cannot be achieved without supporting young people and civil society institutions and organizations that focus on them. We underscore the need to invest in young people in order to help them build their abilities according to principles and values that make them avoid the scourge of crime and networks of corruption and ideological extremism. That is done by supporting and strengthening national, regional and international peace networks that deal with youth and by providing them with protection and education, particularly in conflict-affected areas.

In conclusion, I would like to quote His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, who spoke about today's debate as follows:

> "Young people are our greatest fortune and our best investment. We must develop their skills, polish their talents and exhort them to use education and knowledge so that they can be more mature and responsible and so they can be immune to perverse ideologies".

Ms. Eckels-Currie (United States of America): I thank Jayathma, Sophia and Kessy for their briefings this morning. These amazing young women inspire and humble us all with their poise, power and energy.

It is such a great relief to be here today. Whereas we usually spend our time discussing some of the

most challenging and dispiriting events in the world, today, instead, we get to discuss a topic that is positive, motivating and encouraging for all of us: youth, peace and security.

The United States supported resolution 2250 (2015) because we believe it is imperative for the Security Council to encourage youth to contribute to peace and security. We strongly welcome the Secretary-General's progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), which says very clearly just how crucial and overdue this conversation is, and we thank Mr. Simpson for his work on the report.

When we say youth, it is important to put the numbers into perspective. The progress study notes that there are 1.8 billion young people in the world, which is a huge number but it only represents young people between the ages of 10 and 24, the former United Nations definition before resolution 2250 (2015). Within the United States, we often define youth more broadly, as anyone under the age of 35. If that definition is used, we are talking about more than 4.5 billion people, or 60 per cent of the world's population. This is both an incredible opportunity and a huge challenge.

If empowered with meaningful opportunities and treated in a fair, just and inclusive manner, global youth can be a catalyst for economic growth and lasting peace the world over, but if ignored, marginalized or disempowered, if treated in an unjust or unfair manner, they risk becoming vulnerable to the forces of instability and conflict. The stakes could therefore not be higher for all of us. We cannot afford to marginalize or ignore 4.5 billion people, especially when we have the ability to influence their choices in a positive way. As evidenced by our incredible speakers today, many young people have the drive, tenacity and ability necessary to help bring sustainable peace and stability to countries around the world, and we should waste no time in tapping into that talent. Young people today demand a seat at the table, and we should not hesitate to make room for them.

The United States has long recognized that young people have the ability to help drive their communities, economies and countries forward, and we proudly invest in exchanges and programmes aimed at empowering youth to achieve greater peace and prosperity. Next week, on 2 May, we will hold the third Emerging Young Leaders Awards and Exchange Programme in Washington, D.C., where we will recognize 10 outstanding global youth leaders who have made a real impact as peacebuilders.

One of those outstanding leaders is 24-year-old Tanzil Ferdous of Bangladesh, who promotes youth and community development and women's rights in that country. As the President of Volunteer for Bangladesh, Chittagong, the largest platform for youth volunteerism in Bangladesh, in 2015 Tanzil organized numerous successful events for community development, engaged hundreds of young people in volunteerism simply because she believes that if young people are engaged and motivated to do community service, they will be deterred from violent extremist activities. She is now working with Rohingya refugees, helping to support a safe space for 500 children in the Rohingya camps.

We will also recognize Omar Dahman, Executive Director of the Hebron Youth Development Resource Centre, in the West Bank. He has created a unique safe space for over 2,000 Palestinian young people to learn, interact and lead, including using youth-to-youth entrepreneurship, peacebuilding training and civic engagement.

The knowledge that young people are the primary targets for potential recruitment by extremist organizations should prompt us to build upon current efforts to engage this generation by supporting their voices, ideas and youth-led local solutions. Push factors such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination, boredom and marginalization can lead people down paths of violent extremism. Pull factors such as ideology, a sense of belonging, the prospects of fame or glory and other benefits can draw people towards violent extremist groups. We are in a race against terrorists and violent extremists. We must do more to address the push and pull factors driving young people to violent extremism and provide better alternatives.

We can start by providing greater educational opportunities to youth across the globe, to both young men and women. Education is also a critical preventive tool that can help deter youth from the enticement of global extremists or global criminal networks. We can also address some of the underlying feelings in relation to a lack of fairness and justice that many young people feel when rule-of-law issues are ignored. Important factors such as equal treatment under the law, protecting the freedom of expression and public avenues to voice discontent and ensuring access to

political and economic opportunities help to thwart the attraction of violent extremist ideologies.

The United States is committed to developing programmes that promote leadership and prosperity. One example of a programme we undertake that aims to prevent violent extremism is the Peer-To-Peer: Challenging Extremism programme, which is a public-private partnership with over 40 universities worldwide, in which university students compete to develop the best anti-terrorist narratives. In Tunisia, we support young leaders through the Sharekna project, working with their communities to strengthen resilience in the face of economic, political and social stresses. Young leaders are mapping their communities and facilitating community dialogues to identify issues, then working with stakeholders to respond to these challenges.

The Secretary-General's progress study shows that in 2016 there were more than 408 million young people residing in settings affected by armed conflict or organized violence. How can we empower them to define their futures and overcome life's obstacles? This is done, first of all, by protecting them. In fiscal year 2017, the United States provided more than $8 billion in emergency humanitarian assistance worldwide, and we will continue to provide life-saving protection for the world's most vulnerable populations.

The United States, through our more than 300 Embassies, Consulates and Diplomatic Missions all over the world, maintains strong partnerships with host Governments, non-governmental organizations and youth-focused organizations on the ground. We strongly support programmes that address drivers of conflict and violence, by engaging young people as partners and key actors in fostering social cohesion and tolerance. We must focus on those and other efforts aimed at ensuring that young people are engaged on issues of conflict and security, that they are empowered to take action to prevent and mitigate violence affecting their communities and that their voices are elevated above the fray of conflicting geopolitical interests.

We have come a long way and made strides in firmly establishing young people as partners for peace, but we need to continue building upon resolution 2250 (2015) and turn the ink into action. More than half of the global population will be affected by the commitments made in the Security Council today, and we therefore urge Council members to redouble their efforts aimed at amplifying the voices of young peacebuilders and youth leaders in the fight against violent extremism and its drivers, address the push and pull factors that open the door to violent extremism for so many disenfranchised youth, allow space for young leaders to bring forward political solutions to some of today's most intractable problems, provide more positive alternative pathways for our young people and continue to find creative ways to strengthen partnerships between Government and youth, because the young people with us in the Chamber today are not just our future, they are also our present — right now, today.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for convening today's open debate on a topic that the Council should indeed address and for inviting Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, and Mr. Graeme Simpson, Director of Interpeace USA. I thank them for their very insightful briefings.

I would also like to welcome in particular Ms. Sophia Pierre-Antoine of Haiti and Ms. Kessy Ekomo-Soignet of the Central African Republic. France welcomes the youth representative who is here in the Security Council for the first time.

First, I would like to echo and underscore that it is important to combat preconceived notions and stereotypes about young people, embrace their true potential and give them the trust and support they deserve. Although, youth is synonymous with vitality and energy, young people are paradoxically often viewed as a burden and, as it pertains to security, even a threat. They are puppets of the violence deemed to be intrinsic or easily manipulated by armed or criminal groups. Stereotypes about young people serve to justify the use of repressive force against them and violations of their most basic rights, in particular their right to peaceful protest and to be heard, including in armed conflict.

Young people are too often the victims of discrimination and are by and large excluded from the decision-making processes of political institutions and from the labour market. The majority of young people demonstrate a genuine ability to work together to propose innovative solutions to problems they encounter or to the ills of the societies in which they live. It is therefore essential to reflect on how to provide young people with greater holistic support.

That can be achieved by improving the likelihood of their inclusionin political, social and economic

endeavours and developing psychosocial and reintegration support mechanisms. It can also be done by acknowledging that the key to ending the exclusion of young people and their recruitment by armed groups lies in their access to quality education, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4. Studies on five decades of armed conflict reveal that education is a key factor in reducing the risk of conflict. Lastly, it can be achieved by supporting their role as agents of sociopolitical change and as partners of the development and peace process. In that regard, I would like to cite by way of example the Youth Forum that France has organized with Tunisia in recent years, held in Tunisia.

Like Ms. Pierre-Antoine and Ms. Ekomo-Soignet, young women should be seated at the negotiating table and recognized as partners for peace. The Council should ensure that occurs within the framework of the women and peace and security agenda and beyond. Young people play an increasingly important role in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. The independent progress study on youth and peace and security conducted by Mr. Simpson highlights several instances in which organizations led by young people have had a positive influence on political, humanitarian and human rights situations before, during and after conflicts.

Because such organizations often have modest resources, results are conclusive, in particular because they are innovative and use social and increasingly participative media to advance their goals. The Council cannot ignore the dynamics already at work and must engage young people in building peace by encouraging effective and lasting partnerships among youth organizations, Governments, agencies of the United Nations, civil society and the private sector. Symbolic measures are not enough.

Secondly, we must strengthen the implementation of the youth and peace and security agenda, in particular by building on the foundation provided by resolution 2250 (2015). In that regard, I would like to thank Peru for proposing a new draft resolution. France fully supports that initiative and stands ready to work with Peru and Sweden to make it as operational as possible. It is vital that the new text be relevant to the women and peace and security agenda and the issue of children and armed conflict by seeking genuine value added. France supports the idea of the publication of a regular report of the Secretary-General on the issue. The report should follow the United Nations For Youth calendar by taking the various youth forums into consideration.

Without duplicating the efforts of other forums, we hope that the Council can closely monitor the agenda and perhaps establish an informal panel of experts and a tripartite ad hoc group, as recommended by the independent study. With regard to measures taken, we welcome the efforts made by the Peacebuilding Fund and by the United Nations Development Programme, which already helps to support young people and youth organizations in several countries. Such actions could be strengthened.

Above and beyond the efforts of the Council, the United Nations must seek to better support sustainable development projects that assist young people, ensure respect for their basic rights and support their political participation. I would like to underscore the fact that action should be taken in the area of education, which is a priority for President Emmanuel Macron, who has announced an increase in France's contribution to the Global Partnership for Education to €200 million. Nationally, France helps promote the positive role played by young people. France will host a global forum for peace from 11 to 13 November in Paris. The forum will seek to bring together individuals, institutions and civil society organizations, including youth organizations, that reflect global diversity and are committed to promoting multilateralism and collective action in an effort to meet the challenges of our people 100 years after the end of the First World War.

Projects, such as the Youth in the Sahel, are carried out by the French Development Agency and we provide support to United Nations funds and programmes on the ground. A young diplomats' association, within the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, was established by young people themselves and its first international meeting, at which the issue of migration was discussed, was held this year in Marseilles.

Young people are a dynamic force and reflect a promise of rebirth. The Council must engage them instead of ignoring them. They are not a problem; they are a vital part of the solution. The United Nations as a whole must work to acknowledge them and grant them more power and a greater role in the area of peace and security.

Victor Hugo wrote that young people are the smiling face of the future. If the future is to smile on us, we cannot ignore it. Let us work together to impart

the wisdom, the meaning and the confidence they need for talent development so that they can make an active contribution to the quest for international peace and security. France will continue to work to promote the youth, peace and security agenda and to make it effective and fully operational.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank the Peruvian presidency for taking the initiative to organize today's first open debate on the follow-up to the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015). We thank the briefers for their respective remarks. I would also like to commend Mr. Simpson on the independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86) and note with appreciation the extensive consultations he has undertaken in the process leading to the preparation of the study.

It should indeed be a matter of great concern to note from the study that in 2016 an estimated 408 million young people between the ages of 15 and 29 resided in areas affected by armed conflict or organized violence, meaning that at least one in four is affected by it. With regard to the protection dimension, we continue to note with great concern the precarious situation in which young people find themselves in conflict and post-conflict situations in different parts of the world. They are at a heightened risk of violence, threats to their physical safety or exposure to various human rights violations. As they are part of the civilian population, ensuring their protection from the impact of conflicts, consistent with international humanitarian law, is critical. In our view, such protection should also extend to young people who have participated in an armed conflict.

As the study points out, it is also worrying to see that young people are excluded from various policy frameworks as agents for change, particularly with regard to the prevention of conflict and post-conflict situations, besides the fact that the engagement and integration of their concerns into development efforts can be limited. In our view, the broader findings of the independent progress study, as well as its recommendations, could serve as the basis for a comprehensive response in the context of the three pillars of the United Nations — peace and security, human rights and development at national, regional and international levels. In that regard, we should envisage comprehensive implementation of the recommendations primarily at the national level, including through enhanced and meaningful engagement with young people.

High levels of youth unemployment and poverty continue to be among the root causes of many conflicts and outbreaks of violence, and are increasingly providing opportunities for extremist groups to expand their activities. Progress in our national development efforts, particularly by creating jobs and decent work opportunities for young people, are therefore vital to promoting peace, preventing crises arising from conflicts as well as lapses and relapses into conflict, enabling recovery and building resilience. In that regard, ensuring sustainable development for all at the national level in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be the primary focus of our efforts to prevent conflict and achieve sustaining peace. For that, it is critical to provide access to education, basic services and decent work opportunities for young people. That means recognizing that young people can be active agents for sustainable development, peace and security. It also means ensuring that they are consulted and encouraged to participate actively in planning, implementing and following up various measures at the national level. It is our considered opinion that such a policy shift would enable us to ensure that young people are less likely to be drawn into violent extremist or other armed groups. And beyond the immediate essential humanitarian responses in post-conflict situations, finding durable solutions for young people who have been affected by armed conflict is crucial.

In that regard, in addition to measures that the study identifies in the area of disengagement from violent groups and reintegration, it is critical to provide support for sustainably integrating young people into their societies, including by ensuring access to services and to opportunities to generate income and earn a livelihood. The problem of the large numbers of young people who are now refugees in various parts of the world without prospects for the future, and the search for solutions to that problem, should also form part of the discussion. Work in this area at the national level could be complemented by efforts at the regional and international levels as well. In that regard, the role of regional organizations such as the African Union will be critical. Internationally, the United Nations and its various agencies and programmes, as well as the Security Council, can be instrumental in advancing the youth, peace and security agenda within their mandate and ensuring follow-up to resolution 2250 (2015). For

instance, the Council could follow up, as appropriate, on relevant recommendations in the independent progress study in the context of existing thematic issues or country-specific situations on its agenda, including in the context of existing reporting frameworks, and taking into account the particular concerns of youth populations — including those who have been forcibly displaced — that conflict situations have left particularly vulnerable.

I would like to conclude by affirming our commitment to advancing the youth and peace and security agenda within the existing frameworks, the Council and the broader United Nations system, including by negotiating a possible Council decision following the independent progress report in the next few weeks.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to thank today's briefers for their very interesting opinions. We are also grateful to Mr. Simpson for his preparation and presentation of the independent expert group's study on the role of young people in processes related to ensuring peace and security. Its content and recommendations will definitely enrich the discussions of Member States in the United Nations forums to which this subject is directly relevant.

The study was requested by resolution 2250 (2015), adopted on 9 December 2015, which emphasized the important role that young people can and should play in building modern societies free of terrorism and extremism, including through constructive participation in the processes of building and maintaining peace. There is no question that young people's problems, however heartily we wish it were not so, cannot be viewed in isolation from the context of the fight against the threats of extremism and terrorism, to which young people, unfortunately, are likely to be more exposed than almost anyone.

A willingness on the part of some to look the other way where the activities of terrorist groups are concerned has already enabled them to threaten the future of entire countries whose societies have been plunged into social, political and economic chaos, something that is particularly evident in Iraq, Syria and Libya. And it is not just States in the Middle East that are under threat. Young people, with their unformed world views, their quest for an identity, their lack of broad life experience and sometimes lack of education, are a highly vulnerable sector of society. Young people are among the first to feel the negative consequences of economic crises, social instability and armed clashes, factors that malefactors often exploit in order to involve them in illegal activity, including through social networks and other Internet channels. This is not just about terrorism and the extremism that can lead to terrorism, but also about political processes dressed up with slogans about democracy, directed from outside and aimed at overthrowing legitimate authorities.

Today's much vaunted and trendy support for young leaders should not be used by outside actors to encourage anti-State and anti-Government movements in countries that they do not like. It is immoral to try to achieve these ends by exploiting young people's inexperience, desire for quick self-actualization and inclination to express themselves through protest. Young people are shamelessly deceived and used in dirty political games under plausible pretexts. The connivance or indifference that various States have shown to the growth of nationalism, xenophobia and radicalism — which, unfortunately, are very successful at pulling young people into their orbit — should not be tolerated.

What is needed in order to combat all these issues is thorough preventive, systematic effort, above all at the national level. It is the States' job to prevent terrorists, radicals and political malefactors from influencing young people by nipping extremist propaganda in the bud and increasing young people's resilience in the face of it. At the same time, it is crucial to use the Internet, and traditional media as well, to promote a positive agenda. It is important to actively disseminate among young people — and with their help — notions of mutual respect and intercultural and interreligious dialogue, taking local traditions and specifics into account. This should not be politicized. Young people should be protected from political pressures until they reach legal age. Secondly, we must to create the conditions that can enable young people to realize their potential and become socially and economically integrated into society, including by providing them with a quality education and employment opportunities. Creative pursuits, culture and sports are also effective tools to that end. They enable young people to participate in socially meaningful activities, help them improve their skills and talents, increase their self-confidence and self-esteem and inculcate them with the concept of peaceful coexistence. Lastly, we should not the forget

the importance of strengthening the family and family values. Many of the problems we have heard about today are the result of a neglect of those values, an excessive enthusiasm for individualism and the destruction of long-standing social foundations.

Young people's involvement in any political activity should be a natural process based primarily on acquiring professional knowledge and skills. There should be genuine equality in this area, which means that not only should society's most vulnerable sectors be supported but that no artificial quotas or privileges, including with regard to age or gender, should be tolerated. We believe it is important to tap constructively into young people's potential — particularly their energy, versatility and ability to navigate cyberspace easily — by fostering, among other things, an atmosphere that does not tolerate violence and that rejects extremist and terrorist ideas.

States affected by conflicts, where establishing the necessary youth policy programmes and strategies is very hard and sometimes impossible, for understandable reasons, are in a much more difficult position, needless to say. The most urgent issue in such countries is protecting civilians, including young people, a task that is the responsibility of national Governments. In that regard, I want to point out that the international community's efforts should be aimed at supporting national efforts in that area. It should undertake no response measures, especially any involving the use of force, without authorization from the Security Council and in strict adherence to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations. It is also important to ensure that all parties to an armed conflict comply with their obligations under the norms of international law on the protection of civilians, including young people, as well as the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977. Thorough, objective investigations, based on reliable information, should be conducted for crimes involving deliberate attacks or the excessive use of force, and those responsible must be punished.

Russia knows first-hand the importance of interactive cooperation with young people. Indeed, it is difficult to overestimate the value of the fresh ideas that young people can share in exchange for the knowledge we provide them with. In 2014, the Russian Government adopted the foundational principles for the State's youth policy for the next decade. The key principle of the concept is relying on young people as drivers of innovative development of the State, which in turn should create all the conditions for developing their human potential. We must ensure comprehensive and continuous support to the younger generation in order to guarantee our society's long-term development.

International forums and events also play an important role in bringing young people together. In Sochi in October 2017 we were pleased to be able to host the nineteenth World Festival of Youth and Students, in which more than 20,000 people from more than 180 countries participated. Many interesting ideas were expressed during that event in the same spirit as those that we heard today from our young speakers. We will definitely and actively take them into account in our efforts to support young people.

I would like to conclude with a few important points. First, despite the importance of the subject of young people, our quest to identify the youth-related aspects of the acute problems that we have heard about today should not overshadow the importance of the work that adults are doing to solve some of them. This should not be merely a formal approach or a competition to see who can find and propose the largest number of ways to involve young people. Not all the problems that we are facing can be solved that way, and no one is going to relieve us adults of the main responsibility for solving them.

I would also like to point out that despite the great importance of today's discussion, it is also important to maintain the effectiveness of the United Nations and adhere to the division of powers of the organs of the Organization. In accordance with the Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Issues of war and peace, requiring urgent and sometimes immediate decisions, are discussed around this table every day. Needless to say, the Council does not act in isolation. In every discussion we rely on the experience and expertise of specialists who are also working every day to develop crucial documents pertaining to their specializations.

It would be much more effective to have an in-depth discussion in specialized United Nations platforms on such aspects of youth issues as education, employment, sustainable development and human rights. We must not create the illusion that bringing such youth-related topics to the Security Council will lead to a breakthrough and enable us to resolve them more effectively. We believe that the Council has neither the right nor sufficient expertise to usurp the right of

the professionals to such discussion, and that general issues and topics that are not directly related to threats to international peace and security should be discussed substantively in international forums especially created for the purpose. Whether we do or do not address a particular topic in the Security Council should not be a factor in determining its importance or urgency for the international community. Let us be more responsible in adhering to the existing division of labour.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate today. It is clear that there is a lot of interest in the Chamber, and that a lot of us are wrestling with common challenges, while we all have very similar hopes and aspirations for what might be done in this area. While I therefore take Mr. Polyanskiy's point about how different parts of the United Nations should remain in their own lane, so to speak, I think that, as a number of speakers have said, if we do not factor in as a long-term trend the growing numbers of young people, and particularly unemployed young people, in certain parts of the world, we will find ourselves facing many more peace and security challenges. I thank him for having raised that point today. I also thank the briefers and wish to say well done to the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, who I had the pleasure of meeting recently.

From our perspective, it is good to do this in the Security Council because it touches on a very important angle of future peace and security. Speaking for myself, I would be very interested to have a youth and economic development discussion in the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly as a complement to what we are talking about today. If anyone else is interested in that, I would be very keen to have a discussion. It is very good to be able to evaluate the impact of resolution 2250 (2015). It is fantastic that we can hear directly from youth and civil society.

For our part, the United Kingdom welcomes the independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86), and we congratulate its authors on its participatory and consultative methodology. It is striking, as it has brought together more than 4,000 youth voices from all over the globe. I think that this is not just important in itself, but it sets an important model and high standard for future United Nations reports. If there is any way of embedding that consultative approach more widely, we, for one, would definitely welcome that.

As a number of speakers have noted, more than half the world's population is below the age of 30. That means that young people are not just key stakeholders in every sphere of life — from driving political change to defending and promoting human rights to peacebuilding and contributing to economic development — but they also represent a key risk factor. If we do not get right the development and encouragement of the aspirations of young people, then it will be very difficult to keep countries on an upward trajectory. I think, therefore, that we should reflect on that point.

As we have also heard today, the failure to include youth can often actually exacerbate a conflict. Too often, conflicts emerge when people do not feel represented by their political leaders. We have seen that in Syria, and not only there. At the same time, in countries like Afghanistan, and perhaps even Iran, what youth think can often be an important indication of the potential for reform in those societies.

In the United Kingdom we believe that enabling young people to speak for themselves in political processes can be the first step to taking real action. The British Youth Council, which has 600 democratically elected members, sits annually in the House of Commons to debate a subject chosen by a youth ballot. Last year, almost 1 million people participated. Many of our countries are familiar with Model United Nations, which does something very similar here as well as in Geneva. Last week, London hosted the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and the eleventh Commonwealth Youth Forum met. They pledged their ongoing commitment to countries' efforts to build a more prosperous, secure and sustainable future.

A number of speakers have mentioned preventing violent extremism. It is very important that strategies to that end — sometimes called countering violent extremism — include youth. Young people often understand, much more than my generation, the dynamics and impacts of terrorist narratives on radicalization and recruitment, and they can be involved in promoting an alternative narrative of tolerance and inclusion. If anyone doubts that, I invite them to get hold of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Shams equivalent to *Vogue*, which targets a very particular segment of young women. In its propaganda it is incredibly skilful about getting out certain messages. Countering that, dealing with that and putting out a positive narrative is something to which we all need to give attention.

Supporting youth advocates goes beyond just giving them a platform; it is about building capacity and it means providing education to ensure that all young people have such a chance. There is a clear case for education, particularly girls' education. We know that it contributes to a safer, more prosperous world. We know it reduces conflict and increases stability. Today 131 million girls across the world are deprived of an education, and of the 774 million illiterate adults in the world, two thirds are women. That is why girls' education is one of the United Kingdom's priorities and one of my Foreign Secretary's priorities. We will be working with other partners to try to deliver a minimum of 12 years of quality schooling to every girl. That commitment to education is also why the United Kingdom endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration last Thursday. It is vital that our schools remain places of safety and that they be protected from conflict.

Resolution 2250 (2015) outlined the need for young people's voices to be heard in Government, civil society and industry, and this open debate is a key opportunity to reflect on our implementation of the strategy it set out. We look forward to sharing experiences with others to that end. I thank you again, Mr. President, for calling this open debate.

Mr. Dah (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, for her briefing. Our thanks also go to Mr. Graeme Simpson, lead author of the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86); Ms. Sophia Pierre-Antoine, member of the Advisory Council of the World Young Women's Christian Association; and Ms. Kessy Ekomo-Soignet, Executive Director of the Organisation URU in the Central African Republic.

My country welcomes the Security Council's consideration of the this agenda item, which gives perspective to the consideration of young people and their manifold contribution to the problems of peace and security in the world. If we accept that the world today has the largest-ever proportion of young people, it is important to involve them in efforts to transform our societies, particularly in protecting them, as advocated by the Secretary-General through his commitment to place prevention at the heart of his agenda.

To that end, in accordance with its authority, the Security Council adopted resolution 2250 (2015), which formally recognizes the positive role and rights of young people to work towards lasting peace, including inviting Governments, international organizations and other actors to support them in such a role. The main goal remains, as Mr. Simpson clearly underlined in his study on the issue, to prevent violence and promote the integration of young people in an effort to put their inherent energy at the service of peace and security in the world.

As the Secretary-General said, "We must not only think about projects for young people, but with them." Therefore, instead of seeing them through the prism of negative stereotypes, it is important to consider young people, in accordance with the approach of resolution 2250 (2015), as peacemakers whose efforts and contributions must be recognized and supported with a view to encouraging them to become involved as agents of change in our societies. One of the key lessons to be learned from Mr. Simpson's study concerns the ability to fully trust young people to demonstrate their capacity for action and initiative. Young people are a dynamic entity, capable of strengthening the abilities to react and adapt and demonstrate resilience in their communities.

The comprehensive implementation of Mr. Simpson's study, which favoured a participatory approach, is based on a number of case studies in various countries around the world, including Côte d'Ivoire. Taking into account my country's recent past, the progress study on youth, peace and security highlights the demographic weight of youth, where the most striking statistic shows that three out of every four people are under 35 years of age.

The changing impact of young people in the promotion and consolidation of peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire requires clear initiatives, namely, understanding youth diversity and strengthening the capacity of young people to better understand their contribution to peace, bolstering their legitimacy as peace stakeholders and promoting a model of youth commitment to peace. The lessons of the study show the importance of the effective inclusion of young people at all levels, as part of an approach centred on national ownership.

Imbued with that reality and inspired by a forward-looking vision, His Excellency Mr. Alassane Ouattara, President of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, has made the issue of young people one of the main pillars of his Government's policy with a view to strengthening

peace and security in Côte d'Ivoire. Accordingly, the establishment of a ministry exclusively dedicated to promoting youth and youth employment and the civil service aims, inter alia, to develop and implement comprehensive policies concerning youth, to establish strategies to inculcate civic values, to encourage youth forums, to counter violent extremism, to bolster the empowerment of young people and to strengthen their role in promoting peace and security.

In that connection, the Ivoirian Government has created a one-stop shop for employment, the Youth Employment Agency, to support Government initiatives promoting youth employment. Moreover, in collaboration with the African Development Bank, the Ministry of Youth has joined the ENABLE Youth programme, which aims at strengthening capacities of young graduates wishing to launch businesses in the agricultural sector. Within the framework of community life and the empowerment of youth, Côte d'Ivoire has established the National Youth Council, a forum that makes it possible to better address young people's concerns.

My delegation welcomes the timeliness of the report requested by the Security Council in its resolution 2250 (2015), as well as the recommendations of the excellent study by Mr. Simpson (see S/2018/86), which will be a source of inspiration for Member States in their approach to youth, peace and security.

Lastly, it is hardly necessary to recall that the participation of young people in peace and security processes at the local, national, regional and international levels requires the establishment of viable and appropriate structures in the decision-making process at every level so that the skills of young people in matters of peace and security can be taken into account. Investment in young people is essential to ensure that peace is sustained for successive generations.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I thank Peru for convening today's open debate on youth, peace and security, which provides a valuable opportunity to recognize the important role that youth can play in building peace and preventing conflicts. I would also like to thank Ms. Wickramanayake, Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, and Mr. Simpson for their passionate and inspiring briefings. I add a special welcome and thanks to Ms. Sophia Pierre-Antoine and Ms. Kessy Ekomo-Soignet, who have ably shown us this morning that youth are a force to be reckoned with.

Let me begin by sharing some additional inspiration with a quote from Nelson Mandela, the centenary of whose birth we celebrate this year. He said:

> "To the youth of today, I also have a wish to make: be the scriptwriters of your destiny and feature yourselves as stars that showed the way towards a brighter future".

I think that, after hearing from our briefers this morning, we can be confident that today's youth are responding to Mandela's call. Our role is to listen to them and include them, as well as to support and enable them in any way we can.

We have a long tradition of youth engagement in Sweden, and we welcome the independent progress study on youth and peace and security, "The missing peace" (see S/2018/86). We are heartened by the renewed international and multilateral focus on youth. The concrete recommendations in the study represent important steps for moving the agenda forward.

Through the adoption of the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agenda, as well as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement, we have created an ambitious and absolutely necessary plan for the world in which we live — a vision of a peaceful and sustainable world. Youth, peace and security constitute a crucial part of the implementation of that broad framework and of the advancement of peaceful, just and inclusive societies.

It is therefore high time that we broke with the destructive narrative of young people as drivers of conflict or as victims. Instead, we must harness their full potential and leadership as effective peacebuilders in all aspects of sustaining peace. We need to build upon young people's knowledge, strengths and enthusiasm to contribute to peace and a better future, and enable their meaningful civic and political participation. The World Programme of Action for Youth underlines that young people can be dynamic agents of peace and help guide national action and international support.

A prerequisite for youth engagement is the political, social, cultural and economic empowerment of youth and the protection and fulfilment of their universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. Ensuring the political and social rights of young people promotes trust in the system at an early age, thereby laying the foundation for a strong and long-standing social contract. The progress study presented today

by Mr. Simpson demonstrates how young peoples' leadership is crucial in promoting peace, inclusion and dialogue. Ensuring the full and effective participation of youth is therefore essential for the advancement of national peacebuilding processes. I would like to highlight the following four points on how we can best move this agenda forward.

First, we must all engage and invest in youth. That means enhancing the quality of dialogue with youth. Increased financing for youth, peace and security is needed, including through more aid in fragile settings, in conflict and post-conflict situations, and for youth participation and empowerment. The Peacebuilding Commission can play an important role by including ways to engage youth meaningfully, during and in the aftermath of armed conflict, in its advice and recommendations for peacebuilding strategies.

Secondly, youth should be heard and seen. We need to recognize the diversity of youth in our analysis and engagement, while ensuring that we systematically disaggregate data by age, gender, socioeconomic background and geographical location.

Thirdly, we must leave no youth behind. It is important to recognize that the exclusion of, and discrimination against, youth based on age, gender, disability, socioeconomic circumstances, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity have a detrimental effect on peace and security. We need to recognize the specific challenges faced by young women and men, including acknowledging that persistent gender inequalities put young women at particular risk. As highlighted by the study, we need to ensure that educational institutions are protected, free from violence and accessible for all.

Fourthly, we must keep pushing to ensure that this issue remains on our agenda. We welcome continuous reporting to the Security Council from the Secretary-General on the implementation of the youth and peace and security agenda.

As the old saying goes, we do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children. This generation of youth is not content to wait. Our children are coming for their inheritance. They are demanding that they play their part in shaping the world they will inherit from us. They are demanding — as Mandela called on them to do — that they be the scriptwriters of their own destiny. Our job is to ensure that they can do so.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): I join others in thanking the three inspiring and courageous young women who briefed us today: Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; and the youth representatives, Ms. Sophia Pierre-Antoine and Ms. Kessy Ekomo-Soignet. I was very inspired by what they shared with us. I believe that, if the future depends on them, everything will be alright. We congratulate Mr. Graeme Simpson, the lead author of the independent progress study (see S/2018/86), and the United Nations entities involved in it for their valuable work.

Today we recommit ourselves to resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security. In that connection, allow me to focus on three issues for this debate: first, the importance of youth participation; secondly, involving youth in the work of the United Nations; and, thirdly, translating the resolution into contextualized actions.

First, concerning the importance of youth participation, the progress study makes clear how young people often feel unrepresented or excluded by the very institutions that are supposed to serve them. Young people are indeed "the missing peace". We believe young women and men to be enormously important contributors to conflict prevention and resolution and to sustaining peace. They have a legitimate desire to participate in decision-making on their own future. Youth have the potential to act as a transformative force in peacefully bringing about change. This is not a threat but provides an opportunity to strengthen a diverse and inclusive society. History has demonstrated that in places such as Prague, Indonesia or, more recently, Tunisia and Egypt. It is no coincidence that human rights defenders are often young people, underscoring the need for their protection, particularly in times when the space for civil society is increasingly under pressure.

That brings me to my second point, on involving youth in the work of the United Nations. It is imperative that we integrate the thoughts and views of young people more structurally in the practice of the Council, as part of the wider United Nations. Young people are a major force when it comes to preventing violence and sustaining peace. As a whole-of-United Nations approach is needed, the Security Council should not be excluded. Therefore, we welcome the contributions of today's young briefers and encourage the Security Council to be open to hearing youth speak on the regular items on its agenda as well. We appreciate the attention that youth have received from the Peacebuilding

Commission and would welcome a structural inclusion in its future work.

We also welcome the active participation of youth in this week's high-level event on sustaining peace. As the progress study recommends, the role of youth should be more strongly referenced in the mandates and reporting of peacekeeping and political missions. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia is a recent example of the inclusion of relevant language on the meaningful inclusion of youth, which deserves more systematic following. I am proud to say that my statement today integrates the valuable input of our youth representatives to the United Nations. We strongly encourage those members that have not done so yet to appoint youth representatives as well.

My final point concerns translating the resolution into contextualized actions. For 1.8 billion young people across the world, there is no one size fits all. Resolution 2250 (2015) therefore needs to be translated into the different contexts and needs of young people, grounded in a thorough analysis of root causes. These joined-up analyses should be part of our comprehensive response in implementing the agenda for sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Our implementation efforts should be made more explicit in order to make resolution 2250 (2015) operational. The European Union is currently devising its own agenda in support of youth, peace and security, and we encourage other regions to follow suit.

As the Kingdom of the Netherlands, we are contributing as well, for example by assisting programmes in support of youth participation in northern Mali, supporting training on democracy and human rights in different countries or, closer to home, establishing community-level programmes in cities such as The Hague to provide opportunities for youth and prevent radicalization.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands believes that the issue of youth, peace and security merits structural debate and the attention of the Council. We therefore join Peru and Sweden in supporting the recommendation to request an annual report by the Secretary-General.

Mr. Wu Haitao (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank you, Sir, for convening today's meeting. I also thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth for her briefing. China listened carefully to the statement delivered by Mr. Simpson, Ms. Pierre-Antoine and Ms. Ekomo-Soignet.

Young people show us the world's future and hope. The international community should strengthen the protection of youth groups in conflict areas and help them to play a greater role in promoting world peace and stability. We should continue to implement resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security. The Security Council should continue to fulfil its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and strive on the basis of its mandates and international cooperation.

First, we must resolutely crack down on terrorists and extremists in response to the harm they cause to young people. Terrorism and violent extremism are the common enemies of all humankind. The international community should abide by the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, unify its standards and, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, resolutely fight all forms of terrorist and violent extremist activities. The United Nations anti-terrorism mechanisms should push the international community to strengthen its cooperation, in particular by taking measures to prevent the corrosive influence of terrorist and extremist ideologies on young people; cutting off the channels through which terrorist and extremist forces influence and incite young people; effectively combating the activities of terrorists and extremist forces in using the Internet to recruit, make master plans and raise funds; and cutting off the black hands of terrorists and extremists reaching out to young people.

Secondly, we must increase our efforts to resolve flash-point and regional issues by finding political solutions and attaching importance to the role of young people in resolving conflicts. The international community and the Security Council should heighten their sense of urgency, strengthen the search for political solutions to relevant flash-point issues and, in accordance with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, assist countries in conflict to advance their peace process and national reconciliation; resolve disputes through the peaceful means of dialogue and consultation; help conflict areas to achieve peace and stability at an early date; and create a peaceful and serene environment for the growth and development of young people. We must ensure the constructive participation of young people in political processes, taking fully into account their views and giving full play to their advantages in peace processes.

Thirdly, we must fully consider the special needs of youth and focus on addressing the root causes of conflict. There are many deep-rooted reasons for conflict, including extreme poverty, unbalanced development and the scarcity of resources. All countries should firmly engage in joint efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and strengthen youth education and employment security. The international community should help developing countries to improve their capacity for sustainable development, especially at the level of youth education and employment, increase social integration and inclusiveness, and cultivate young people's sense of responsibility for social stability.

In that regard, the United Nations and the international community should strengthen cooperation with the African Union and other regional and subregional organizations by increasing support for related projects in the field of youth. China is willing to work with the international community, participate actively in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, take practical measures to prevent conflict, contribute to safeguarding world peace and stability, and help young people to achieve all-round development.

Mrs. Mele Colifa (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to thank the Peruvian presidency for having organized this important debate on the innovative resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, adopted three years ago. I also wish to recall and thank the leadership of Jordan for promoting the resolution.

We are also grateful for the informative briefings provided by Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; Mr. Graeme Simpson, lead author of the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86); Ms. Sophia Pierre-Antoine of Haiti; and Ms. Kessy Ekomo-Soignet of the Central African Republic. They have reminded us most young people of the world wish to contribute and are contributing to peace and sustainable development for all.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes the independent progress study on youth, peace and security. We feel that the study's main results give cause for great hope, since they show that despite the current conflicts and geopolitical tensions on our planet, most of our young people not only want to participate in peace processes but also demonstrate a strong commitment to working for the peace and security of their communities and countries in many innovative ways, through initiatives based on promoting alliances and the use of new technologies. Our youth want peace and they want to facilitate its sustainability and their commitment, since investing in sustainable and equitable development among countries is a way to prevent conflicts and to turn their contribution into a peace dividend.

For those reasons, Equatorial Guinea welcomes some of the recommendations of the report with regard to the importance of promoting national, regional and global alliances in order to ensure research and the collection of the necessary data on youth and peace and security so as to ensure the implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015), 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, and 1612 (2005), on children and armed conflict, and other resolutions relevant to achieving peaceful solutions to conflicts and to protecting the civilians who will bear the responsibility for peacebuilding and sustainable development. In that regard, we are deeply concerned about the more than 400 million young people who live in areas affected by armed conflict, terrorist groups and organized crime and the stigma and violence of social and economic exclusion — which can be linked to the racial, ethnic and religious prejudice spread by populist movements, as well as violent predators and petty criminals — and who become passive or invisible victims trying to escape conflict.

We are talking about the largest generation of young people in history. More than half of the world population is under 30 years of age. Many of them are unemployed. In fact, more than 500 million live below the poverty threshold, and about 14 million of those are refugees or displaced by conflict. In Africa, more than 60 per cent of the population is under 24 years of age. That means that on our continent most victims of conflict and those who suffer most from conflict, not counting women of all ages, are young people and children. Unemployment among African youth is high, fluctuating between 10 and 29 per cent depending on the region. Those figures are due to a lack of development, unequal development among and within countries, a lack of access to fair terms in international markets, and conflict, terrorism and violent extremism, among other issues. That combination of adverse situations makes such young people and children vulnerable to the manipulation of terrorist and organized criminal groups. However, as the report that we are discussing

reminds us, most young people want and are working for peace. That is why the fight against all such evils must be anchored in the commitment to sustainable development and equitable economic growth, gender equality and the empowerment and participation of young people and women at all levels. That struggle should not be on the military front alone.

In his welcome speech at the seventeenth summit of the African Union Assembly, held in Malabo, Republic of Equatorial Guinea, on 1 July 2011, President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, then Chairperson of the African Union, said that he called on African youth as the legitimate heirs to Africa's future, and that for us, young people were not a problem for society but a determining factor in society's development process. That faith in Africa's young people has been a constant during his presidency, as he has demonstrated through his support for African Union initiatives such as the Youth Volunteer Corps, the 2017 theme of harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth for sustainable development, the annual China-Africa youth festival and the fifth summit of the African Union and the European Union, which served to strengthen those initiatives.

At the national level, Equatorial Guinea held its first national youth congress in 2010, which led to the adoption of national policies aimed at ensuring respect for the political, economic, social and cultural rights of young people. They include scholarship systems at both the national and the international level, access to decent housing and initiatives for the creation of decent jobs as part of our Horizon 2020 national development plan.

In conclusion, we want to underscore our support for General Assembly resolution 70/262 and Security Council resolution 2282 (2016) with regard to improving young people's abilities and skills and to creating jobs for them, with a view to contributing actively to sustaining peace. We also encourage the international community to support young people in that regard. Africa is the youngest continent in the world and the only region where the number of young people continues to grow. African youth represents the future of the whole world, not just of Africa. The young people of any region represent the future of all of us. That is why we call for the international community and the various entities of the United Nations, within their respective mandates, to invest in international policies that promote equality, cooperation and brotherhood among countries with the aim of ensuring conflict prevention, sustainable development and lasting peace and security with the participation of young people and in the context of respect for the sovereignty of countries.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank the presidency of Peru for convening and organizing today's meeting. We would also like to welcome the presence of Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Mr. Graeme Simpson, Ms. Sophia Pierre-Antoine and Ms. Kessy Ekomo-Soignet and to thank them for their briefings.

There are currently nearly 2 billion young people around the world, more than 400 million of whom live in areas affected by conflict or organized violence, according to the report presented by Mr. Simpson (see S/2018/86). It is therefore the duty of the international community to pay particular attention to that sector's needs.

War and conflict tend to create a vicious circle for young people as for others. In the case of young people who live in conflict-affected areas, living without expectations of being able to develop in a secure environment, in many cases being prevented from going to school or receiving training and forced to leave their homes, they have fewer options and are therefore susceptible to recruitment by armed or terrorist groups. In order to break the vicious cycle of war, we must address the structural causes of conflict as well as its consequences. Interventionist policies and attempts at regime change have had collateral effects, including on young people.

We must also take into account inclusiveness and the prevention and the protection of young people in conflict situations, as well as the intrinsic relationship between youth, peace and security and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Resolution 2250 (2015) touches on those aspects and is a good starting point, but it is not enough. The recommendations of the progress study on youth and peace and security, as it establishes, are intended to serve as the starting point for a large-scale transformation in which multilateral organizations, States, civil society and other actors must play their role.

Turning to inclusiveness, resolution 2250 (2015) makes a clear call for the participation of young people in decision-making, especially in the areas of peacebuilding, political participation and conflict resolution. In order to do that, an enabling environment

must be created and the necessary mechanisms provided. We also believe that the role of young people must be strengthened through social and economic inclusion. To achieve that goal, young people's participation and needs must be taken into account both during and after conflicts. The case of Colombia, where young people gave the peace process a considerable boost is a clear example. Those young people represented hope by being willing to forgive and move forward. With regard to prevention, the contributions of civil-society organizations led by young people, and the impact of the work they do, as well as their experience, must be taken into account because they have great potential for mobilizing their peers as well as the advantage of understanding the local dynamics and priorities that can be fundamental to lasting peace.

Young people can contribute positively to conflict resolution, but that potential has not been harnessed enough, owing to a lack of resources and to certain stereotypes that depict young people as agitators or victims of conflict. That is why they have been systematically excluded from decision-making and political processes, as has been the case with the young people's civil-society organizations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that have been formulating strategies to peacefully address the lack of security and how to deal with such issues as basic services, medical care and education. We call on the international community to support such organizations with flexible financing and to take their specific needs into account. We should also support demobilization, disarmament and the reintegration of adolescents and young people formerly linked to armed groups, with particular emphasis on reintegration. That includes providing rehabilitation, psychosocial support, education, gender-specific needs and socioeconomic opportunities, as well as sustained support for their families and communities, including the destigmatization of former child soldiers.

Within the framework of the fight against terrorism, comprehensive programmes for recruitment prevention, rehabilitation, reintegration and deradicalization programmes should also be developed, particularly with regard to the issue of foreign terrorist fighters who are returning to their countries of origin, while taking into consideration the issue of accountability when cases warrant it.

Lastly, we should not fail to mention the problems of young people in the occupied Palestinian territories. We reiterate our concern for the young people who have been detained in recent months by the Israeli security forces, including Ahed Tamimi, who has become a symbol of Palestinian resistance and who is being tried in a military court. That is inadmissible. We call on the international community to respect and protect the fundamental rights of young people. If we do not start working on inclusiveness, prevention, and the protection of this sector of the population, we will not break the vicious cycle of war and we will have great difficulty consolidating peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

We appreciate the important briefings by Ms. Wickramanayake and Mr. Simpson, and by Ms. Pierre-Antoine and Ms. Ekomo-Soignet, representatives of civil society. We welcome the large number of countries participating in today's open debate of the Council, and we would particularly like to thank the civil-society organizations for their support and contributions to the preparation of this debate. We would also like to thank the United Nations Population Fund and the Secretariat's Office for Peace Consolidation and Support.

We also want to express our recognition and support for the work of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, and to highlight the Secretary-General's commitment to empowering young people and their participation in decision-making that affects their future.

The current generation of young people is the largest in history. Overall, most of the people affected in the various armed conflicts occurring around the world are young. At the same time, young people can make important contributions in favour of peace and security. Peru would like to emphasize the role that young people are called on to play in conflict prevention and resolution, justice and reconciliation. Young people are crucial to building an inclusive vision of the future and achieving sustainable peace. We therefore welcome the progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86) provided for in resolution 2250 (2015), sponsored by Jordan. It gathers the voices of thousands of young people from all regions of the world, and their message is clear. They want to stop being seen as a problem and to be recognized as stakeholders in peace processes.

Peru believes firmly that this is the right approach to effectively implementing and promoting this issue

on the Council's agenda. It is essential if we are to take advantage of and maximize the potential, commitment and resilience of young people in preventing and coping with conflicts. To that end, it is important to create inclusive and safe spaces that allow young people to participate and contribute to peacebuilding and peace consolidation processes in their national communities. We welcome the efforts that are being made in that regard and encourage their continuation.

This issue is clearly linked to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Among other things, the Sustainable Development Goals oblige us to create decent employment for our young people; guarantee equal opportunities through access to health and education; and promote peaceful societies with inclusive institutions. We are also committed to promoting the human rights of all young people, safeguarding their diversity and fighting discrimination. That means rejecting stereotypes that stigmatize them as persons prone to violence, as well as recognizing and promoting their capacities for participation and leadership in public life. The participation of youth delegates in various United Nations forums and processes is undoubtedly a good practice insofar as it establishes bridges between Governments and youth organizations around agendas that contribute to with the maintenance of international peace and security.

We must also combat the stereotypes that perpetuate discrimination and violence against women; we must invest in peacebuilding efforts linked to young people and promote positive, nonviolent and equitable masculine identities. We believe that promoting dialogue between Governments and youth-led organizations is important to the effective implementation of resolution 2250 (2015).

Peru also considers that the Council should continue to promote this important topic and provide periodic follow-up, particularly in the areas of conflict resolution and sustainable peacebuilding. In that regard, together with Sweden, we will present a draft resolution that we hope will have the support of all Council members. As the progress study on youth and peace and security indicates, the time has come to take a radical turn that recognizes young people as the missing element in peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

As I mentioned, we have a long list of speakers, so I would like to ask speakers to limit their statements to four minutes. For the same reason, the meeting will continue through the lunch hour.

I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Belgium.

Mr. Reynders (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium fully associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of the European Union. I would also like to make some comments in my national capacity.

I would like to thank the delegation of Peru for organizing today's debate and the speakers for their statements. I congratulate Mr. Simpson and his team on the considerable research they have done, which has resulted in an ambitious document (see S/2018/86) that not only gives very concrete recommendations to the United Nations, regional organizations and Member States, but also invites us to deeper reflection and to confronting the challenges related to the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015).

Belgium welcomes the study's emphasis on a positive discourse on young people. It challenges a number of stereotypical conceptions and demonstrates that young people have an important capacity for action that promotes peace. Creating an environment conducive to young adults' participation and inclusion in prevention and peacebuilding processes is crucial. Equal access to inclusive and quality education, as well as opportunities for decent employment, are also key elements in creating that environment. Through education we can help young people to become conscious, critical and open citizens, responsible and capable of thinking constructively about their place and role in society.

Accordingly, our Department of the Interior coordinates a project called Bounce, financed by a European Commission fund. Through a combination of action and reflection, the project is aimed at strengthening young people's qualifications and skills with a view to guiding them towards resilience, which is the ability to bounce back in the face of difficulties. Its training is based on a positive perspective — the strengths and talents of every young person. We have found that by changing perspectives from risk to opportunity, from fear to openness and from control to accountability, we can constructively address the

complex issue of violent extremism and make progress towards inclusion.

At the national level, Belgium already provides a structured platform for young people to express themselves and be heard. Our active participation in the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme is another example of our commitment to inclusion, whereby young people can contribute effectively to the preparation of high-level meetings and participate in them themselves. It is clear that effective inclusion can be achieved only by ensuring the dignity, protection and quality of life to which young men and women are entitled. In that regard, as always, Belgium remains firmly committed to the promotion of human rights, which is a fundamental condition for peace and development, and attaches particular importance to the rights of vulnerable groups. We believe that it is essential to protect the rights of young people and invest in their development so that they can realize their full potential and thereby contribute to peace and security.

It is also important to intensify our efforts to involve young people in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. *Pathways for Peace*, the joint World Bank-United Nations report, emphasizes the importance of including young people in the prevention of violent conflict and strengthening the relationship between development, humanitarian action and peacebuilding. Working for the future of young people as conscious, critical and open citizens who are capable and responsible is working for peace. We therefore fully share the vision that young people must be recognized as essential partners in peace. That is why, in its partner countries, Belgium's development cooperation supports appropriate training, stimulates employment and entrepreneurship and promotes the rights of young people with a view to actively involving them in decision-making processes.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that Belgium is committed to continuing to promote the rights of young people with a view to active inclusion in crucial peace and security processes. In particular, in our work as a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, we will work to ensure that the youth dimension is positively integrated into the Commission's activities. Taking into account the report's recommendations, Belgium will also work to draw attention to the challenges surrounding young people and will advocate for greater integration of the youth and peace and security agenda.

We must also work together on the ways in which the United Nations, including the Security Council, follows up on those recommendations. On behalf of my country, I welcome the fact that the report under discussion today opens the door to a new dynamic in the Security Council. I consider it important that the Council be informed in a timely and comprehensive manner of specific situations that concern young people and are relevant to its mandate. It will have to be better organized, particularly through the use of mechanisms to access the necessary information. The stakes are high, and Belgium intends to make its contribution.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia.

Mrs. Burić (Croatia): I would first like to thank the Peruvian presidency of the Security Council for holding today's timely debate and all the distinguished briefers for their statements.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of the European Union. I shall now make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

I am pleased to be participating in today's open debate on this very important topic, which we see as complementary to the upcoming discussions in the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. Croatia would like to see the role of young people addressed more profoundly in various forums and from various perspectives, and particularly their role as actors in efforts aimed at achieving peace and security. For that reason, we support greater visibility for the youth and peace and security agenda in the Security Council, both by continuing with the practice of holding open debates on the topic and by instituting yearly implementation reports by the Secretary-General.

I would also like to congratulate all the partners who contributed to the progress study (see S/2018/86) on putting together a comprehensive and substantial report that while it clearly gives reasons to be concerned, more importantly gives us insights into the untapped potential of young peacebuilders in our joint quest for a safer world.

It is clear that too little is being done at the national, regional and global levels to harness the potential of the 1.8 billion young people worldwide, especially given

the fact that a majority of them live in low-income countries and often represent a significant part of the populations in countries affected by armed conflict. Young people should be recognized as partners and agents in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, as they unquestionably have a strong voice when it comes to addressing their marginalization, violations of their human rights and lack of perspective. This means that we must reject the myopic view that sees young people as a problem to be solved or that focuses only on the small numbers of those who are involved in violence.

That issue becomes particularly pronounced in the response to the global threat of terrorism and violent extremism, which has in turn often produced limited and counterproductive policy responses. As the progress study also implies, there is no single approach or solution that can prevent young people from participating in violence or being recruited into violent extremism. We also know that youth empowerment is undermined when we continue to rely on generalizations and stereotypes that identify young men as potential perpetrators and young women as potential victims. Especially now, when we are dealing with the challenge of escalating threats of terrorism and radicalism, we must focus on providing for the needs of the younger generation and strengthening their sense of being both safe and included.

Education for all as a human right and a basis for promoting the realization of other rights is essential to peace, human fulfilment and sustainable development. It is a multifaceted effort that has multiplying effects. It goes way beyond numeracy, literacy, the acquisition of relevant skills and the provision of opportunities for decent work. It fosters tolerance, global citizenship and an appreciation and acceptance of cultural diversity, as well as interfaith and intercultural understanding.

Youth unemployment is also far more than an economic category. Lack of perspective is among the worst kinds of poverty. It erodes a society of peace and tolerance from within. Today's topic cannot be addressed thoroughly without taking into account the development component.

We are encouraged by the fact that the youth yearn for committed actions against violence, intolerance and all forms of discrimination, as well as to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Young people can serve as positive role models and are clearly willing to embrace that role. They can influence and inspire their peers, raise public awareness and encourage a broader discussion within a society.

Last but not least, let us not forget that they are the leaders of tomorrow. Young people must be provided with the necessary preconditions to fully realize their potential. It is only with a holistic, multidisciplinary approach that we can achieve sustainable results in empowering the youth, and in turn, promote peace. That includes the implementation of adequate development policies and legislative frameworks, education and inclusive cooperation with a several stakeholders, such as academia, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, religious authorities and the media.

In conclusion, to borrow the words of the great Nelson Mandela, whose centenary of birth we celebrate this year, young people are capable of bringing down the towers of oppression and raising the banners of freedom. We hope that by our joint efforts, today and onward, we will enable them to do so.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Maldives.

Mr. Asim (Maldives): I wish to thank the Government of Peru for convening today's open debate, which is the second to be convened under Peru's presidency this month. The focus on youth and peace and security is most appropriate to complement the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

My delegation welcomes the remarks made by His Excellency Néstor Popolizio, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Peru, Ms. Jayathme Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, and the representatives of the Member States and civil society, which have enriched today's insightful debate.

The youth bring with them an extraordinary level of energy and passion that can be put to use for the cause of peace, to enhance security and maintain stability. There is a need to explore policy and institutional reforms in order to engage youth more productively in creating an environment for peace to prevail. Discussions, such as the one taking place today, serves as a useful platform to share experiences and best practices and to enhance progress on the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015).

We must recognize that in many countries, the youth demographic is often wrongly stereotyped and stigmatized as the culprit of instability. Consequently,

national policies and strategies are often formulated to target youth as an issue to be addressed, overlooking the potential they have to offer in providing innovative solutions. In the Maldives, we believe that the goals and aspirations of the youth are driven by a strong desire for peace and security. It is often external aggravating social and economic circumstances that lead to their involvement in activities that may result in the disruption of peace and security. Therefore, our national policies aim to mitigate those circumstances by ensuring economic inclusion, gender equality, universal education and raising awareness to cater to the needs of the youth.

As recognized in the independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), pursuant to resolution 2250 (2015), we must ensure that the rights of the youth demographic do not get lost in the gap between the rights afforded to children and the rights and political entitlements from which they benefit as adults. That important transitional period from children to adults must be catered for in order to build societies that are resilient to conflict. In that regard, the Maldives also advocates for inclusive policies that recognize and accommodate the concerns of the youth. Constructive and inclusive dialogue with young people instil the idea of democratic societies and resolution of conflict through peaceful means, while carving the right path for future generations.

My delegation also wishes to highlight the importance of partnerships to enhance the engagement of youth through innovative means such as art, sports and media, which have a wider outreach in targeting this population demographic. The Government of the Maldives has made significant investments to ensure that young people are afforded the necessary social and economic opportunities and to help to build cohesion and unity among them. In that context, I wish to highlight the crucial role that media, including social media, has to play in shaping the minds and perceptions of future generations. It is important to limit the spread of misinformation and ensure that ideologies that contribute to unity and social cohesion are propagated among the youth. It is crucial to strike a balance in guaranteeing freedom of speech, while ensuring that incitements to violence and extremist ideologies are not proliferated.

The Maldives has always perceived the youth as partners for peace, rather than a cause of instability. My delegation advocates for changing the perception of youth in a similar fashion among countries in conflict and where conflict may emerge. Young people have a strong potential to contribute to the prevention of conflict through building cohesion and resilience within societies and their role must not be overlooked. Catering to a youth-inclusive approach would require significant investments, which will reap invaluable benefits, by providing a stable, prosperous and peaceful future for generations to come.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland.

Mr. Thórdarson (Iceland): I would like to thank the Peruvian presidency of the Security Council for convening today's open debate on youth and peace and security. I also thank the briefers for their excellent statements. The independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86) is very informative, and Mr. Simpson and his team have clearly consulted widely.

The study highlights the fact that most young people hold a responsible and sophisticated view of the world. The 1.8 billion young people in our world are better connected than ever before. They know what is going on locally, regionally and globally in a way their parents and grandparents never have. That means they can compare what is occurring in various parts of the world. They see where Government and democracy is working but they also see how deprivation, human rights abuses and inequality undermine peace and prosperity.

Young people know that if societies are to be peaceful and secure, they will need more than just the absence of violence. They want to safeguard the planet and are aware of climate change as a potential cause of conflict for future generations. Nevertheless, the study reveals that Governments tend to treat young people as a problem rather than partners for peace. Yet, most young people are peaceful. They want to take action and lead but often feel excluded from the political process. Education has a powerful role in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, but getting it right is complex. The media gives a misleading view of young people, in particular young men, and certain political forces seek to manipulate them for political ends.

Societies that allow young people to participate in public life are less likely to experience violence. For example, the brutal repression of young demonstrators and political activists by the Syrian authorities contributed to igniting the seven-year long conflict.

Those and other elements in the study should concern us deeply.

The study makes useful recommendations that the United Nations and the Security Council could consider more closely. We would support recommendations that keep youth and peace and security on the agenda. When the Security Council is designing peacekeeping operations, the impact on youth should be considered. Inclusive processes for peace and security have been shown to give greater results. Thus, the participation of young people in efforts to prevent conflict is not only right; it is essential for success.

The Security Council and the General Assembly must work together to make the youth and peace and security agenda operational. I welcome the Council's expected draft resolution on youth, peace and security and the decision by the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, to host a Youth Dialogue on 30 May.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey.

Mr. Çavuşoğlu (Turkey): It is an honour to address the Security Council on this special day, 23 April, when in 1920, the Turkish National Assembly met for the first time, in Ankara. The founder of our Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, dedicated this day to children worldwide. Today, our hearts and minds are with children and youth who are oppressed, trafficked and smuggled around the globe.

There are 1.8 billion young people in the world. That is the largest youth generation in history, and it is a key asset for our common future. Yet today, all around the world, extremist ideologies, radicalization and terrorism are targeting young people. Terrorist groups such as Da'esh, Al-Qaida, the Kurdistan Workers Party, the People's Protection Units and the Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü abuse and recruit women, children and youth. Xenophobia, anti-Islam currents, ethnic and religious discrimination and socioeconomic marginalization are the root causes of radicalization among youth. We must stop this. What we need is a holistic approach.

In Turkey, half the population is under the age of 31. In addition, we host almost 1 million Syrian youth, and we have developed tailor-made Government structures and policies to address their needs. We encourage youth to fully participate in economic and social life in Turkey. We have lowered the age limits for parliamentary elections, and we make sure that they take part in decision-making processes. We promote role models, social reintegration and rehabilitation programmes. Education is also a key factor. We leave no one behind and provide equal opportunities for all. We also promote dialogue among young people from different backgrounds. All of those efforts complement our work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We, the decision makers and politicians, have important responsibilities. One of the reasons for the rise of extremism in Western Europe in particular is the divisive language used by some politicians. That approach divides people along ethnic and religious lines, and that is a very dangerous game. We must refrain from creating stereotypes. Instead, we must convey message of unity, positive messages.

Radicalization and violent extremism are not limited to one particular religion, faith or community; they are our common challenge, and we need to face it together. Resolution 2250 (2015) is proof of the crucial role of youth in peace and security. The new resolution to be adopted should provide further guidance. We must also use the potential of existing mechanisms, such as the Alliance of Civilizations. Spain and Turkey are trying to re-energize that initiative, which we need more than ever.

We also need to create interaction among national, regional and global measures. Good practices and lessons learned in one part of the world can be employed globally. That is why we need to expand the United Nations capabilities to support Member States. We will continue to contribute to all the efforts aimed at empowering youth.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

Ms. Kobia (Kenya): On behalf of the Kenyan delegation to the United Nations, I congratulate you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate on the role of youth in the prevention and resolution of conflict, as well as in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

Additionally, I would like to commend Mr. Graeme Simpson on his leadership in producing the progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), which engaged Kenyan youth as part of the consultative process. We appreciate the substantive

recommendations presented to Member States for adoption and implementation in our respective national capacities. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, for her comprehensive remarks and the other briefers for their insightful comments.

Kenya has a very young population, with roughly 78 per cent of Kenyans below the age of 35. At a time when the global youth population is at its highest, the empowerment and meaningful participation of the youth in all aspects of society is of fundamental importance and has become a top priority for the Government of Kenya.

Despite growing recognition of the crucial role of young people in conflict resolution and prevention, they still face difficulties not only in accessing the negotiation table but also in influencing discussions and decisions once they are part of the mediation process. That is largely due to the negative or indifferent attitudes of conflict parties towards inclusive processes and young people's limited political experience and clout.

In order to reduce barriers and fully realize the potential of youth in the promotion of peace and stability, the Government of Kenya has undertaken concrete steps to create spaces for young people to gain awareness and engage in the prevention of conflict and maintenance of peace. In that regard, Kenya has already begun the process of developing a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015). Consultations will begin to take place at the county, national and regional levels to raise awareness and gain insight from the relevant stakeholders prior to the development of the draft action plan. Youth organizations, civil society, international organizations, academia and the private sector, among other relevant stakeholders, will be key partners in that initial stage, as well as upcoming stages.

In addition, Government bodies dealing with peace and security matters are already taking steps to be more inclusive. The National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management has implemented guidelines for peace structures, which stipulate that for every 15 of its members there should be male and female youth representation. .

Moreover, through capacity-building training on peace, national cohesion, conflict resolution and mediation, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission has been able to reach 24,964 young people across the country in its aim to create a pool of young cohesion agents.

At the local level, a number of structures have been created within educational institutions to facilitate a greater contribution from the youth to the peace and security agenda. *Amani* clubs — which translate as "peace clubs" — have been established from the primary to university education levels. Supplementary to *Amani* clubs, each public and private university has a group of peace ambassadors. Youth groups have also been established in informal settlements and rural areas, thus leaving no one behind.

I must recall that radicalization and violent extremism continue to be a challenge for Kenya, and more specifically Kenyan young people. We urge the Council to unite more powerfully and go beyond condemning violent extremism by also acting against religious and ethnic-based hatred and exclusivity, which undermine the potential of our youth. In that regard, there is a need to collaborate with the private sector, especially social media companies, to deny terrorist groups access to those platforms as a means of radicalization.

Let me end by reiterating Kenya's commitment to the full implementation of resolution 2250 (2015). We welcome the recommendations made in the progress study on youth and peace and security, and we look forward to working with all relevant partners in the adoption of those actionable steps at the national and local levels.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Estonia.

Mr. Reinart (Estonia): I would like to thank the Peruvian presidency of the Security Council this month for organizing this timely debate, ahead of the General Assembly's high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The issue of the participation and engagement of youth in achieving and sustaining peace truly deserves our attention at every step of the way. In that regard, we very much welcome the Security Council concept note (S/2018/324, annex) on this topic.

Estonia also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union.

Let me start by emphasizing the importance of resolution 2250 (2015), which for the first time addressed the need to engage young people in peace and security discussions and recognized that young people

play a crucial role in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security.

Estonia welcomes the independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), and we highly appreciate that a number of young people were involved in its preparation. We hope that the study will be followed by action based on its recommendations and that it will help to start truly meaningful engagement of youth on matters related to peace and security. I would like to highlight some aspects in particular concerning why the meaningful engagement of youth is of paramount importance.

First, encouraging the youth to be active participants in society contributes directly to the prevention of violence, including violent extremism and conflict. If we are to succeed in our prevention efforts globally, it is essential that we put inclusion at the heart of prevention strategies. The progress study noted that structural inequalities and social, political and economic exclusion contribute to youth poverty, violence and powerlessness. Therefore, in order to develop more inclusive societies, we need to support equal access for all young people to education and labour markets, advance their human rights and fundamental freedoms, promote the rule of law and gender equality and reach out proactively to the most marginalized young people.

Secondly, broad-based and people-centred peacebuilding partnerships that meaningfully include youth, women, civil society organizations and other social actors are essential in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The youth are key actors of social transformation, and allowing them to contribute with their enthusiasm, idealism, energy and innovative solutions will benefit peacebuilding efforts. Therefore, once conflict has ended, it is important that young people have the opportunity to participate in post-conflict activities and decision-making processes.

It is important to allow the empowerment of the voice of young people. To make that voice better heard, Estonia lowered the voting age from 18 to 16 in local elections, in response to the initiative of young people who wished to be more involved in the decision-making process at the local level. Thee outcome has been positive.

It is high time for the contribution of young people to sustaining peace to be further recognized and supported by Member States and the United Nations system. In that connection, we also welcome the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2018/43), and we are looking forward to further discussion on that during the high-level meeting this week.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Montenegro.

Mr. Darmanović (Montenegro): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's debate on youth and peace and security, and I commend Peru's strong commitment to this issue. I also thank today's briefers for their valuable input to this debate.

Montenegro aligns itself with the statement to be made by the observer of the European Union. Still, I would like to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

We are continuously witnessing the dramatic consequences of conflict and violence in different parts of the world. It is often young people who face obstacles, ranging from discrimination, marginalization and poverty to armed conflict. Their voices are distinctively underrepresented on issues that concern them, including peacebuilding and the prevention of conflict. Young people are the main victims of direct violence in conflict situations, but sometimes also are the perpetrators of violence, due to their vulnerability to both voluntary and involuntary military recruitment.

The issue of youth and peace and security requires joint action. We welcome the findings and recommendations of the progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), pursuant to landmark resolution 2250 (2015). Montenegro participated in the negotiations for that resolution as part of the Eastern Europe and Central Asian region.

The potential of youth to facilitate peace processes is often undermined. We believe that it is crucial to involve youth in such processes as stakeholders and decision makers. That allows them to gain ownership of the policies that affect them and all of us.

There are many talented and creative young men and women who are pioneering innovation and new social media tools and ways to reach the young population. Montenegro supports all efforts aimed at voicing the needs and priorities of young people and proposing sustainable solutions for their problems. The national youth strategy of Montenegro for the period 2017 to 2021 focuses on facilitating the access of young people to the labour market and employment and to quality education, their active participation in decision-making processes

and policy creation and access to quality health care and to culture, both as creators and consumers. That is how we are striving to create an efficient framework for the systematic improvement of the position of young people in Montenegro. We strongly believe that investing in youth is the best investment for the stability and prosperity of our society.

The contribution of the United Nations system in Montenegro, through different programmes and projects, particularly the Programme on Youth Empowerment, is of great importance for enabling young people to use their full potential in decision-making, entrepreneurship and participation in various social activities. Montenegro is also very active in connecting youth from the region of the western Balkans. Representatives from the Government and civil sector of Montenegro participated in a comprehensive process of establishing the Regional Youth Cooperation Office. We are proud that Montenegro was the first to establish a liaison office for that important regional initiative, which aims at reconciliation through the joint activities of young people of the western Balkans region.

Young people around the world can make an important contribution to sustaining peace and stability. We realize that achieving the goals of peace and development concerns their future, and they should have a crucial stake in it. It is both a demographic and democratic imperative that young people actively participate in decision-making and are treated as a vital asset to any society. Providing young people with the right educational tools for crisis prevention and peacebuilding has a positive impact on development and sustainable peace. Montenegro genuinely supports United Nations efforts to create spaces in which youth can contribute to the peace and security agenda, and it stands ready to be a reliable partner in those endeavours.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine.

Mr. Kyslytsya (Ukraine): Ukraine aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union. In my national capacity, I would like to add the following.

I would like to express our appreciation for your initiative, Mr. President, to hold this open debate on the issue of youth, peace and security. I also thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, for her briefing, as well as the other briefers for their input.

Just over two years ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2250 (2015), recognizing that the energy and creativity of young people should be harnessed and actively engaged in shaping lasting peace and contributing to justice and reconciliation. We highly appreciate the work of the team led by Mr. Graeme Simpson, and we welcome the progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86) prepared by its members in response to the resolution. I would like to assure my colleagues that the Ukrainian Government is carefully studying the recommendations contained in the report and will consider them in the process of further adjustment to its national youth policy.

Unfortunately, we have to admit and agree with the conclusion of the study: many young people around the world are frustrated by the tendency of their Governments and international actors to treat youth as a problem to be solved, instead of as partners of peace. It shall be one of our priorities to address that challenge, in order to contribute to international peace and security. We firmly believe that the 1.8 billion young people around the world can play a crucial role in building a world that is more peaceful than what we have now. That can be achieved through ensuring the inclusiveness of youth policies aimed at seamless social integration and accommodating young people's positive and creative potential, to the benefit of societies.

We shall continue to pay special attention to this issue through United Nations programmes and special procedures for youth. Young people are the future. While actively contributing to peace and security through participation in peacekeeping operations — I invite those present to just look the average age of Blue Helmet personnel — they also suffer most from political and man-made disasters, as do women and children.

I should like to highlight the fact that youth are among those who suffered most in Ukraine from the Russian aggression in Crimea and Donbas. Young people in those areas lost their chance to receive quality education and to work. More than 60 per cent of internally displaced persons are young women. Nevertheless, tens of thousands of young people actively volunteered by providing support to our armed forces in the fight to protect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine. Youth and student organizations became equally active in delivering aid and humanitarian assistance to the people affected by the ensuing hostilities.

My delegation has repeatedly urged the Russian Federation to accept its international legal responsibility, and we demand the termination of its wrongful acts in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the city of Sevastopol and certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. As an example, according to the latest report on the human rights situation in Ukraine of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which was released a month ago, the Russian Federation continued to compel Crimean residents into its armed forces, conscripting at least 4,800 men within two campaigns in 2017, in violation of international humanitarian law. Moreover, courts in Crimea started to hear cases on charges of draft evasion. We therefore demand that the Russian Federation stop the illegal practice of the conscription of young men in the occupied territories and respect its obligations as an occupying Power in accordance with international humanitarian law, as defined by the General Assembly.

No matter how proud the actions of Ukraine's youth make us feel, repelling the foreign aggression and managing its consequences is not the fate we envisioned for our younger generation. Therefore, the Government of Ukraine is now committed to qualitatively strengthening the potential of our youth, as well as creating equal opportunities and guaranteeing equal rights for them. In that regard, we strongly believe that education has to, and will, play a leading role in shaping the future of our youth, reinforcing their role in public life and instilling a spirit of open-mindedness, tolerance and a can-do attitude.

To achieve that goal, an educational reform was launched in 2017 with the adoption of a law on education. That, among other things, is fully in line with the recommendation of the progress study to support inclusive labour policies and practices that ensure equal access for all young people to the labour market and the enjoyment of fundamental principles and rights at work.

We reiterate our position that the empowerment of youth and youth-oriented organizations is essential in promoting positive role models, finding proper responses to violence and building a peaceful social fabric. Therefore, with regard to the youth population, the Government of Ukraine has moved away from the patronizing stance of working with youth to an inclusive approach of youth participation. We note that such an approach is also advocated by the authors of the study before us.

Ukraine is convinced that the role of youth in ensuring peace and security cannot be overestimated. The energy and creativity of young people can contribute to the development and progress of their societies. Unfortunately, there are also numerous examples showing that energy can be, and is, exploited for destructive purposes. It is our joint responsibility to assist the younger generation in pursuing their aspirations to build a better world of tomorrow, to equip them through education with the right tools and to make sure that young people become agents of peace and positive change.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Ms. Baeriswyl (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): As Mahatma Gandhi once said, if we are to reach real peace in the world, we shall have to begin with the children. Given that nearly half of the world's population is under the age of 24, it is crucial to address their needs and vulnerabilities and, even more, to harness the great potential of young people when it comes to building a peaceful and safe society.

I would like to focus on two areas that the Secretary-General recommended in his progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86): inclusivity and education.

First, young people will have to live tomorrow with the choices that we make today. It is therefore essential that we include them in today's decision-making. That is not only an ethical imperative; it is also in the interests of an international community that is serious about its future. If peace is to be successfully sustained, it has to be supported, embraced and implemented by the youth — women and men.

There are numerous initiatives on political participation, some of which we have heard and admired today. I would also mention the African Youth Parliament and the European Youth Parliament. They are proof that young people want to take an active part in shaping the future of our countries. We should encourage them so that they also inspire those who so far have chosen not to participate in referendums and elections. Democracy is a work in progress and has to be constantly worked on and defended, in my country as well as in all others.

Youth inclusivity is particularly important in conflict situations. In Syria, young people will play an

instrumental role in the search for a sustainable solution. It is for this reason that Switzerland has supported the Civil Society Support Room in Geneva since 2016. More than 1,000 participants, most of whom are under 30 and represent over 400 Syrian non-governmental organizations, have participated in these negotiations under United Nations auspices. They have played a constructive role in identifying priorities for the future of Syria's young people. We shall continue to support them as much as we can.

Secondly, I turn to education, defined by the poet William Butler Yeats as "the lighting of a fire". It is by educating young minds that great change becomes possible. We need a great change. All young people should have access to inclusive and equitable quality education, as called for in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, violent conflict and persecution have uprooted many young women and men, with displacement reaching record levels. Half of refugees today are under 18 years of age and spend more time in displacement and exile than in school. That is the seed of future lost generations. A small minority may even embrace alternatives with regard to their sense of belonging, status and power, and the risk of violence is thus exacerbated.

This is where we have to step in to break the vicious circle of misery, radicalization and conflict. Switzerland has therefore increased its budget for education activities in fragile contexts by 50 per cent. Over the past few years, for example, we have rehabilitated 128 schools in the Middle East, thereby facilitating access to schooling for around 86,000 young people, among them many Syrian refugee children.

An estimated 408 million young people aged between 15 and 29 are living in contexts of organized violence or armed conflict throughout the world. We need to intensify our efforts to allow this generation to have a future and to enjoy peace, security and prosperity. There are great challenges ahead, and it is difficult to predict how long it will take to overcome them. But as the saying goes, the best way to predict the future is to create it. I suggest we do exactly that, together with our young people.

Today's debate and the resolution to be adopted are a further step in the right direction and for this, Mr. President, I warmly thank you.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Leffler: I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I would like to start by extending a special thanks to the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and to the lead author of the independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), as well as to the representatives of youth and civil society, for their statements. Allow me to express the EU's appreciation for the progress study and its support for the recommendations therein. The EU contributed to this landmark process through hosting a European regional consultation on youth, peace and security, and we welcomed that opportunity to channel the voices of young Europeans into this process.

We applaud this open debate, with appreciation for Peru's leadership and the envisaged adoption of a new Security Council resolution on youth and peace and security. We anticipate a forward-looking, strategic outcome to accelerate the implementation of this important agenda. We also support annual implementation reports by the Secretary-General as well as yearly open debates in the Council, including briefings by young peacebuilders.

The youth, peace and security agenda reminds us that young people want to be heard; they want to take action and they want to lead. Recognizing and empowering those aspirations is the promise of the youth and peace and security agenda. Allow me to lay out the perspective of the EU on this topic.

To begin with, we need to challenge the generalizations which identify young people with the risk of radicalization and violent action. That mistakes young men for potential perpetrators and young women for potential victims. On the contrary, we know that the overwhelming majority of young people — like all of us — seek a peaceful future for themselves, for their neighbours and for the broader national and international community. We see that too little is done to harness their potential to prevent conflict and to contribute to sustaining peace.

The progress study and this open debate provide an excellent opportunity to shift this narrative. In this context, the EU fully shares the view that preventing violence and sustaining peace is best served by addressing young people's experiences of exclusion and marginalization. The EU also heeds the call of young people, amplified by the progress study, to prioritize and invest in youth-based and youth-led peacebuilding activities.

I would like to offer three messages regarding inclusion, resilience and leadership.

First, the EU has always striven to promote broad-based, people-centred peacebuilding coalitions, which meaningfully include youth, women, civil society organizations and other partners. We continue to accelerate the implementation of the youth and peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda, which are closely interlinked and mutually reinforcing.

For the EU, youth inclusion starts with two-way dialogue with young people. We want to understand their vision for peacebuilding and find opportunities to support and scale up their initiatives. Exactly a month from now, the EU will host an innovative and inclusive conference on youth, peace and security in Brussels, in partnership with the United Nations and civil society organizations. We hope that the conference will create a new area and a new framework for young peacebuilders from within and outside the EU to engage in an interactive dialogue with leaders and stakeholders from the EU and with multilateral and non-governmental partners. The conference will further reinforce the momentum behind the European Union's focus on the youth and peace and security agenda and our cooperation with the United Nations on youth in peacebuilding.

Secondly, the EU's investment in youth is currently the focus of multiple programmes on four continents. As an example, we have recently launched a project with UNICEF to strengthen the resilience and civic engagement of adolescents and youth in conflict-affected areas in eastern Ukraine. A global project with UNESCO works to strengthen education sector planning capacities for conflict prevention and crisis preparedness. Another EU project in the Democratic Republic of the Congo reinforces youth involvement in conflict prevention in areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army.

Thirdly, the EU fully shares the call of the progress study to maximize youth ownership and agency on peace and security. One illustration of how we empower young people's leadership is the Africa-EU partnership. At the fifth African Union-European Union Summit, which took place in Abidjan last November, young people provided political recommendations on priority topics for the African Union (AU) and the EU. Moreover, a number of the young people present spent five weeks working intensely with AU and EU structures to develop those recommendations into a youth agenda with concrete initiatives and proposals. That agenda was presented to African and European Heads of State at the Summit, and we are currently working on a follow-up mechanism to ensure the continuous inclusion of young people in the Africa-EU partnership.

As the progress study underlines, young people's work is a connector across peace and security, human rights, sustainable development and humanitarian affairs. In the same vein, the European Union's work for and with young people connects all actors, policies and instruments of the EU and represents a key aspect of the coherence of our action within and outside the Union.

Many people, across all ages and generations, are ready to make a difference to build peace. Mobilizing the potential of young people as peacebuilders is one of the big challenges and opportunities of our time. The youth, peace and security agenda charts the way forward for all of us working together.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Finland.

Ms. Sipiläinen (Finland): I would like to thank Peru for convening this debate. Finland commends the progress study on youth, peace and security by the Secretariat (see S/2018/86) and thanks Mr. Graeme Simpson, along with his Advisory Group of Experts, for their thorough work in carrying out the study.

Finland aligns itself with the statement just delivered by the observer of the European Union.

The Security Council adopted resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, in 2015, but the seeds were planted by active youth long before then. The resolution promotes the idea of youth as a positive force towards peace. Today it is important to focus on the effective implementation of the resolution. The progress

study at hand is an invaluable instrument in supporting the full participation of youth in peace processes.

Finland is pleased that prevention has been established at the centre of the agenda of Secretary-General Guterres. The progress study emphasizes the role of young people in conflict prevention.

It has become clear that an inclusive approach to peacebuilding is necessary for the achievement of good quality results and that sustaining peace requires the involvement of a wide range of actors from different parts of society. That means youth, women and civil society.

In most of the societies suffering from violent conflicts, women are underrepresented in both formal and informal decision-making. As we know, youth make up another significant part of the population that is often marginalized from political processes. That means that the voices of young women too often go unheard, and especially so in conflict situations. In Finland, Ms. Jutta Urpilainen, the Foreign Minister's Special Representative on Mediation, has chosen to focus her work on both young people and women as priorities.

The women and peace and security agenda promoted by resolution 1325 (2000) has gained significant normative and political strength since its adoption, 18 years ago. Finland remains strongly committed to advancing the women and peace and security agenda, and our recently published third national action plan on the resolution was drafted with the close participation of civil society. We hope to see a similar path of progress with regard to the youth, peace and security agenda.

I wish to take this opportunity to commend Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake for her work as the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. We look forward to continuing our close cooperation with her.

Active Finnish youth organizations have played a strong role in promoting resolution 2250 (2015). In our future efforts to advance the implementation of the resolution, we intend to keep civil society, especially youth organizations, strongly involved in the process. Our national 2250-Network, a group of stakeholders and non-governmental organizations with a focus on representing youth, is a concrete example of that work.

The progress study sends a strong message about the importance of keeping young people on the agenda of the Security Council. The youth perspective should be a mainstreamed, overarching approach in future resolutions, with mechanisms for following up its implementation. The progress study teaches us that building mutual trust between young people and Governments is a prerequisite for improving youth participation. That means actively promoting their participation and giving them responsibility, not just tolerating their presence. The report also includes concrete recommendations that need to be implemented. I would particularly like to highlight recommendations related to education and media literacy, which can contribute both to recovery and building a peaceful future.

Our role as decision-makers in our societies is not to work for the youth, but with them. Young men and women do not need the voices of others to speak on their behalf; they just need to be enabled to get on the stage to speak for themselves, instead of being prevented from doing so.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Frølich Holte (Norway): First of all, I would like to thank Peru for organizing this debate. Norway congratulates the authors of the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86). We are also proud to have supported the study financially.

As the Secretary-General has pointed out, without the full involvement of young people, there will be no sustainable peace, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not be achieved and violent extremism will not be curtailed. There is no greater resource than our youth. Both the Security Council and the General Assembly recognize the key role young people can play in maintaining and promoting international peace and security.

Norway has taken several concrete steps to implement resolution 2250 (2015). Through our involvement in peace and reconciliation efforts in Colombia, the Philippines and South Sudan, we have seen at first-hand the important contributions of youth. Based on that experience, we encourage the inclusion, at an early stage, of young women and men in peace negotiations and the resolution of conflict.

Norway supports a number of youth movements, including the Youth Civil Activism Network. The organization has 1,300 members in 125 countries and

helps young people to develop skills and resources to counter extremism in local communities.

Education is a main priority for Norway. We have doubled our support to global education over the past four years to ensure schooling for more than 3 million boys and girls annually.

In the Group of Friends of Preventing Violent Extremism, which is co-chaired by Jordan and Norway, we share lessons learned and best practices for including youth and civil society in national strategies to prevent violent extremism.

At the national level, Norway has developed legislative frameworks to ensure the integration of youth into policymaking and the development of initiatives to empower young people. We have also established integration programmes to promote the active participation and inclusion of refugee and migrant youth in Norwegian society.

In 2014, the Government launched its action plan against radicalization and violent extremism, which outlines a strategic cross-sectoral approach. The action plan focuses particularly on preventing the radicalization of young people. One of the measures in the action plan is a guidance programme for parents and guardians.

Norway will continue to empower young women and men to be agents of change in their communities — not only to prevent violent extremism, but to remove its root causes. As I said at the beginning, the innovative abilities of youth will be crucial for achieving sustainable peace and development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Jordan.

Ms. Bahous (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): We appreciate Peru's cooperation, work and efforts to hold this important meeting during its presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would like also to thank the briefers, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the two young women from Haiti and the Central African Republic. I also thank Mr. Simpson for preparing the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86). We thank the Peacebuilding Support Office and the United Nations Population Fund for their great efforts over the past two years. I would like also to thank the United Nations Development Programme and all those who contributed to the implementation and design of this important first study on youth, peace and security.

We are proud to once again attend an interactive and constructive discussion on the youth, peace and security agenda, which was launched by Jordan during our membership of the Council in December 2015 (see S/PV.7573), based on the vision of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, who presided over a historic meeting on this topic during Jordan's presidency of the Security Council (see S/PV.7432).

We recall that the Council adopted resolution 2250 (2015) as the first resolution of its kind — unprecedented international recognition of the need for young men and women to contribute to global efforts to enhance sustainable peace. The resolution has paved the way for the participation of youth in decision-making at all levels and supported youth in building capacity to take the initiative and participate in charting their present and their future. It has helped to transform the stereotypes that youth are the problem and the culprits or victims of violence, into a positive perspective that sees youth as partners in combating violent extremism and terrorism and achieving a much-needed culture of peace.

The youth, peace and security agenda is crucial. More than half of the world's population are under the age of 30, with 70 per cent of them living in two regions torn apart by conflict, namely, the Middle East and Africa. The international developments and challenges that we face, especially in the Middle East, have created a reality that lacks stability and has negatively impacted youth and children, who have lost their opportunities and access to quality education due to displacement and slow economic progress. That requires serious international and national attention to provide development needs in the areas most affected by conflict, as part of the conflict prevention effort. That would help to enhance the resilience of youth vis-à-vis the challenges they face.

In the light of the reality in our region, we have launched the youth, peace and security agenda based on our conviction that there needs to be a voice given to youth at all levels. They need to contribute to policies and institutional programmes regarding their future, which would help us empower and support them in improving them skills and realizing their true potential. In turn, that would serve their societies and countries. Resolution 2250 (2015) was therefore a

historic resolution aimed at peacebuilding, sustainable development and enhancing trust between youth and those who provide them with empowerment, as well as the activation and operationalization of the role played by civil society and youth organizations.

Jordan takes a leading role in the fight against terrorism at the regional and international levels. We have established several initiatives and believe there must be concerted international efforts against terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization, while employing a moderate counter-narrative. To that end, with the cooperation of Norway, we participate in the Group of Friends on Preventing Violent Extremism, which supports the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and provides guidance to youth through United Nations agencies' various counter-terrorism initiatives and projects. We are also the co-facilitators of the sixth review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. We hope that a draft resolution is agreed to improve the international response to countering terrorism.

It is not enough to invest in policies and security plans. We must invest in policies and sustainable development plans that focus on quality education, employment, the role of women and addressing the root causes of inequality and social injustice and that enhance the loyalty of youth to their societies and homelands. That would create a link between peace and security and development. National strategies in support of youth need to be coupled with policies that support childhood, which is a strong basis for the upbringing of a very positive youth generation.

Jordan believes that investment in youth is done through a number of means: first, by establishing a modern educational system that caters to labour market needs and eliminates poverty and unemployment; secondly, by enhancing the culture of peace among youth, improving their participation in decision-making at the national and political levels and encouraging their voluntary work; thirdly, the economic integration of youth into their societies that goes beyond simply providing them with job opportunities and by enhancing their participation in strategies at the national and local levels; fourthly, by enhancing the role of the media through different platforms that would support youth and improve media coverage on the positive input of youth and their role, as well as encouraging creativity; and fifthly, by enhancing the role of youth in social peace and cohesion and enhancing dialogue for the exchange of experiences.

We are implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that connection, our national strategies and policies have linked the important role of young men and women to those goals, which we cannot achieve without youth participation and without providing every opportunity for youth to build their capacity and realize their potential in order to achieve development. In our younger societies, youth are the link between peace, development and human rights.

Jordan welcomes the progress study mandated by resolution 2250 (2015). The report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace (S/2018/43) enjoys our support, as do the recommendations that are part of the reform of the United Nations development system and other United Nations reform processes. That constitutes a road map for the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015) and for enhancing the participation of youth in peacebuilding and their ability to create positive change. We call for the implementation of such a mandate — particularly as we are investing in the capacity of young men and women, providing them with useful political participation and ensuring all forms of protection against violence — so that they are able to exercise their rights.

We support national, regional and international partnerships and the establishment of new dialogue and accountability mechanisms at the United Nations level. Jordan has begun to implement resolution 2250 (2015), as well as other relevant recommendations, and has established the Champions for Youth group. So far, it includes 24 member States, in addition to the European Union. The aim is to follow up the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015) and maintain international political momentum. Jordan has cooperated with other United Nations agencies and partners to create programmes for young men and women refugees, in particular Syrian refugees.

At the national level, we have also developed policies and strategies in line with resolution 2250 (2015). We established the Youth 2250 project, which seeks to raise awareness among young people about the implementation of the resolution. In that regard, we thank the European Union for funding the project. Jordan also developed a national youth strategy for the period 2017-2025 in order to identify priorities in supporting youth,

including training programmes for civic education and participation in decision-making at the local level. That is in addition to our national strategy for women, which we developed to implement resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security.

We have also included a youth pillar in our comprehensive strategy to combat violent extremism, and amended our national laws to include provisions that enhance the role of youth and their positive political participation.

Jordan has also launched a number of initiatives that empower youth and enhance their participation, including providing young entrepreneurs with financial support for their projects and helping them find creative solutions to challenges in their communities. That serves to promote Jordan's efforts to safeguard young men and women and prevent an environment conducive to extremism. Among the most prominent of our initiatives are the King Abdullah II Award for Youth Innovation; our Achieve Initiative, which was awarded the Alexander Bordini International Prize for 2016; and our National Democratic Empowerment Programme.

Finally, we face great opportunities but also great responsibilities. We must translate the demographic opportunity that is our youth into genuine peace through frameworks that support young people and their capacity at all levels to build sustainable world peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to begin by thanking the Peruvian presidency for convening this very timely open debate on youth, peace and security.

(*spoke in English*)

I would like to thank Mr. Graeme Simpson, who did a tremendous job as lead author of the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86). I also thank all the other briefers who today gave us very insightful and thorough presentations, starting with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy, whose work we enthusiastically support.

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union, as well as with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Romania on behalf of the Peacebuilding Commission. I wish to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

My country firmly believes that in today's world young people are vital drivers of peace, change and prosperity. Their specific sensibility and forward-looking approach, as well as their idealism, creativity and energy, can meaningfully contribute to building and sustaining peace, providing long-term sustainable solutions and fostering conflict prevention and reconciliation.

Italy is strongly committed to the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda. We were the first Member State to provide support to the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth after her appointment as the new Envoy.

In our vision, youth policies represent the best link between the peace and security agenda and Agenda 2030, in accordance with Secretary-General Guterres' view on sustaining peace. In that spirit, I am glad to announce today that the Government of Italy has decided to finance a major initiative for bridging the two agendas and supporting their joint youth-led implementation. Through an initial allocation of $500,000 to the Department of Social and Economic Affairs (DESA), Italy is contributing to the development of a new project entitled "Young People's Contributions to Sustainable Peace in the Framework of the 2030 Agenda", devised by DESA in cooperation with several other United Nations agencies, including the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the United Nations Development Programme.

This broad project is aimed at strengthening the capacities of Government officials, youth organizations and civil -society partners in the formulation and implementation of national policies and programmes promoting sustainable peace and security. Through an open and inclusive participatory process, the project will design and test key instruments for promoting the participation of young women and men in processes geared at preventing violent conflict and sustaining peace in their societies. The outcomes of the project will first be implemented in pilot countries in Africa and the Middle East and North Africa region.

We are also committed to building networks of young peacebuilders and activists in our own country. Through an inclusive selection process involving civil society, the Italian Government has for the first time appointed two youth delegates who, through nationwide advocacy activities as well as participation in meetings

at United Nations Headquarters, are helping to promote the culture of active participation by youth in peacebuilding and reconciliation processes.

Finally, the role of the Security Council is pivotal in promoting the role of youth in peace and security. To that end, as recommended in the progress study, we would encourage the establishment of an informal working group on youth, peace and security, akin to the one on women and peace and security. We must continue to tirelessly promote this agenda in the interests of all. The Council can count on Italy's full support and long-term commitment in that regard.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Giacomelli Da Silva (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. We are also grateful for the briefings presented in this debate.

Brazil is of the view that resolution 2250 (2015) was a landmark resolution in that it recognized the need for a comprehensive and positive approach to the role of youth in preventing armed violence and conflict and in peacebuilding. Young people make up the majority of the population in countries in conflict and suffer disproportionately from its effects. It is estimated that young men make up 90 per cent of fatalities in conflicts today.

Conflicts and armed violence also affect young people by disrupting their access to education and economic opportunities, which has a lasting impact with direct negative consequences on peacebuilding and the prospects for sustainable development of future generations. Young people are also particularly vulnerable to violent extremism and organized crime. However, we must refrain from stereotypes associating youth with violence, as well as hasty and repressive responses. As recognized in resolution 2250 (2015), we need an approach that is not only reactive, but also preventive. In particular, the international community should focus on addressing factors that contribute to the involvement of young people in violence, such as poverty, the lack of educational opportunities and social and cultural exclusion. It is also essential that young people play an active role in post-conflict settings through mechanisms that ensure the participation of young people in all stages of the peace process.

From a broader perspective, it is necessary to create conditions to ensure the representation of young people at all levels of governance. As noted in the progress report, young people have been fully demonstrating their capacity for leadership for peace in a wide range of contexts — from preventing violent extremism, political conflicts and organized crime to activism in the area of nuclear disarmament and small arms regulation.

Although Brazil has not been affected by armed conflict on its territory, the country is still responsible for promoting progress on the issue of youth, peace and international security. During its chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission, Brazil sought to prioritize youth by paying attention to their specific needs and challenges in conflict and post-conflict contexts, while encouraging their active participation so as to achieve lasting and inclusive peace. We remain firmly committed to the empowerment of young women and men through projects aimed at building their capacity and at income generation in the framework of the chairmanship of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. Those initiatives, supported by Brazil, also reflect the goals that the country seeks to reach domestically, with the broadening of opportunities for young people.

We are pleased that the Council and other United Nations entities involved in peacebuilding are lending special attention to the issue of youth, peace and security. However, we believe that we must strengthen our cross-cutting approach to the matter, including by incorporating it into the mandates of peacekeeping missions, preparing annual reports on the subject and bolstering the direct engagement of young people in the decision-making and principal organs of the United Nations system.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): My delegation welcomes this open debate on youth, peace and security. We wish to thank all the briefers for their comprehensive briefings. The independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86) was particularly useful and illuminating.

The world today has more young people than ever before — 46 per cent of the global population is under 26 years of age. Many parts of the world, including my own country, has a youth bulge, with young people making

up a majority of our populations. Inspired by hope, optimism and an unbridled sense of idealism, youth are agents of change in their communities and societies. Yet, despite being repositories of the world's greatest hopes, the young also find themselves at the forefront of some of the biggest challenges that we confront today. In an ever-changing and increasingly complex world, they face the pressures from socioeconomic inequalities, political and social exclusion, discrimination and a lack of fair opportunity.

Young people are also some of the worst victims in situations of armed conflict, humanitarian crisis, foreign occupation and long-standing and unresolved disputes. Their sense of justice is aroused and their patience is frequently tested by the inconsistent and often selective global response to their pain, suffering and plight. Yet we see that many of the fundamental causes enraging our youth are often conspicuous by their absence in our discourse on those issues.

As Secretary-General António Guterres reminded us recently,

> "No one is born a terrorist, and nothing justifies terrorism, but we know that factors such as prolonged unresolved conflicts, lack of the rule of law and socioeconomic marginalization can all play a role in transforming grievances into destructive action."

The toxic message of violent extremism preys on the vulnerability of youth, recruiting them to its violent ways by playing on their sensitivity to injustice and oppression, and propagating hate, intolerance and violence as the sole response to numerous inequities. If one has nothing to live for, one finds something to die for. We must break that nexus between desperation and hopelessness.

The role of youth lies at the heart of international peace and security. For far too long, young men have been considered perpetrators of violence, and young women its victims. While a small minority of youth takes to violence, sweeping characterizations of young populations have for long exacerbated their sense of marginalization. It is time to debunk those false stereotypes. It is time to recognize that youth are not merely instruments of war, but essential partners in peacebuilding. They are architects for economic and social development and the establishment of effective, inclusive institutions.

We need to fight the violence of exclusion by talking to young people, listening to them and giving them the voice that they deserve. Resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, redresses that critical gap in global thinking by recognizing the key role of youth in conflict prevention and promoting lasting peace. We must build on that momentum. There cannot be any half measures in seeking to translate our commitment to our youth.

My country, Pakistan, is proud to have led the charge in successfully implementing holistic and comprehensive strategies to counter the narrative of extremism, and at the same time engage our youth so that they can become productive members of our society. We have adopted a whole-of-society approach based on engagement with civil society, including faith leaders, local communities and the media, to promote the concept of a plural society based on building peaceful and harmonious communities. A major focus of that approach has been the empowerment of youth at the grassroots level by engaging them as decision-makers in the decision-making process.

We are also investing in youth so as to provide them an opportunity to live their dreams and enable them to become my country's future leaders. My Government has launched the comprehensive Prime Minister's youth programme, which aims at providing the young and underprivileged with skills training and access to higher education and employment. That, I am happy to report, has already benefited over 1 million young people.

We were proud to showcase many of our achievements during the event entitled "Investing in Youth to Counter Terrorism", which Pakistan co-hosted with Norway and the United Nations Office on Counter-Terrorism here at the United Nations on 12 April. Speaking at our event, Secretary-General António Guterres said, "I do not agree that young people are the leaders of tomorrow. More and more, they are the leaders of today." Let us therefore commit ourselves, or recommit ourselves, to building on the positive energy and innovative spirit of our young people and to striving for a world where the illusion of cynicism gives way to the ideal of hope and equal and inclusive opportunities available to the young match their boundless ambitions. That is the least we owe to them.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Slovakia.

Mr. Mlynár (Slovakia): I thank you very much, Mr. President, for the initiative of organizing this open debate on youth, peace and security today to further discuss the positive role that young people can play in conflict and post-conflict settings and how the Security Council can help young people build safer and more peaceful societies. I would like to especially commend you, Sir, for your leadership during this month. It is obviously no coincidence that, shortly after last week's open debate on women and peace and security relating to sexual exploitation and abuse (see S/PV.8234), we are today focusing on an issue that is of no less importance, namely, the role of youth. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, as well as the others who briefed the Council and enriched its deliberations this morning on this important issue.

I cannot agree more with my colleague from Pakistan, who just spoke before me, when she said that the youth are agents of change. I would add too that we should also view them as ambassadors of change, or drivers of change, who really deserve our close attention, including in the area of peace and security.

In that context, I recall resolution 2250 (2015), of 9 December 2015, which is a milestone document in our efforts to focus our attention increasingly on the issue of youth, peace and security. It was the first to recognize the important and positive role that young women and men play in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security, countering violent extremism and supporting peacebuilding efforts. Steps that have been undertaken based on resolution 2250 (2015) aim at strengthening youth-centred approaches and promoting the involvement of young people in preventing violence, countering violent extremism, transitioning from conflicts and building peace in their communities.

Young people under the age of 25 today make up the majority of the population in many fragile and conflict-affected societies. They represent over one third of populations displaced by conflicts and disasters, and that is why we all have to work together to promote the full implementation of resolution 2250 (2015). In that regard, my delegation welcomes and supports the commitment of the Security Council to intensifying its focus on issues relevant to the topic of young people, peace and security within the broader context of sustaining peace and preventing conflict.

Resolution 2250 (2015) also requested that the Secretary-General carry out a progress study on young people's positive contributions to peace processes and conflict resolution. We believe that the recommendations set out in the implementation report presented to the Council today (see S/2018/86) are an important contribution to an evolving framework for action within which Member States, the United Nations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders could work even closer together with young people towards achieving peaceful and inclusive societies. My delegation encourages the Security Council to further consider the critical issues and areas for intervention recommended by the study, which fall within the scope of its responsibility to bolster concrete and specific actions for a greater role for young people to play in strengthening peace and security.

Too often, public grievances and violence are driven by the politics of exclusion, which can result from an unrepresentative or abusive security sector — or by the latter's failure to protect citizens from security threats and human rights abuses. Exposure to such destabilizing factors and insecurity can have a profound effect on the future of young people and their relationship with justice and the rule of law. I am highlighting the issue of security sector reform because, in only a few minutes from now, at 3 p.m., South Africa and Slovakia, as co-Chairs of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, will host a high-level round table focused on the issue of security sector reform and sustaining piece, which is a contribution to this week's ongoing efforts related to peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We will certainly also focus our attention on the role of youth in the context of the security sector and in the wider context of sustaining peace.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the need to raise greater awareness and understanding among young people of the security sector and its work and responsibilities, as well as the key challenges and threats that security services may face, not least because young people often are also at the core of security sector personnel and those who serve the security sector and the rest of the population. Young people must assume an active role in the restoration of justice and security as a priority in post-conflict peacebuilding. Creating an enabling environment and opportunities for young people throughout those processes in a participatory and engaging manner in public life and facilitating their access to education and employment remain the best

strategy to decrease the risk of violence and increase human security in the long run.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Marzooq (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of my country would like to thank Peru's delegation, the President of the Security Council for this month, for organizing this constructive debate on youth, peace and security. Young people make up the most important segment of society. They are the ones who achieve the desired objectives when it comes to reconstruction, peace and countering extremism and violence.

My country believes that the main threat facing the world and youth today is the scourge of terrorism and extremism, which represents a serious challenge to all the societies. In its modern history, Iraq has suffered from war tragedies that have depleted much of its potential, especially the potential of its youth. Young people are the mainstay of our nation and the source of creativity and development. Iraq therefore has sought to invest in its youth to ensure their participation in decision-making, liberating our land, countering extremism and terrorism and preventing terrorist groups from recruiting young people in order to fuel hatred and destruction. We have sought to make young people agents for peace and security. A collective international commitment to a long-term strategy is the most effective solution for eliminating extremism and violence and addressing their causes.

My country has supported its young people and has been committed to the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015). Our national youth strategy for the period 2013-2020, developed in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund, includes plans and programmes to promote constructive mindsets among Iraq's youth and strengthen cooperation, brotherhood and anti-violence efforts. We have also sought to encourage sports among Iraqi youth as an alternative to violence and terrorism. Since 2003, Iraq has been attempting to rectify the mistakes made by the previous dictatorial regime with regard to our young people by inviting and encouraging sports teams to visit Iraq. We have established the conditions necessary to assure all international parties that Iraq can now host sporting events at the international level by providing the appropriate environment for that.

Iraq has also encouraged the participation of young people in elections and electoral campaigns. We encouraged the establishment of a youth parliament, which held its first session on 10 October 2017, to create a genuine nucleus for free and sound political thinking that promotes the objectives of Iraq and the international community towards achieving security and peace. My country has adopted a governmental programme focused on strategic priorities to promote youth services and well-being. It includes the establishment of youth facilities and sports clubs to promote young people's athletic, cultural and scientific talents. The Iraqi Government has issued a national human development report entitled "Iraqi Youth: Challenges and Opportunities", which focuses on the concept of joint prosperity and well-being, which is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Iraq is also seeking to adopt plans to eliminate youth unemployment and to encourage the employment of young people by providing them with short-term loans, supported by the State, in order to improve their income and well-being. The visit by the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to Iraq in August 2017 was in support of our national youth strategy.

Iraq has realized the real potential of youth in its fight against terrorism. That is why we adopted a strategy to liberate our country and to ensure reconstruction based on young people as active force that believes in the spirit of challenge and patience. Iraq is currently encouraging its diaspora to return to the country and to invest their potential and experiences in the country's reconstruction. My country is aware of the need to rebuild a new society with young Iraqi hands, and eliminate the phenomenon of wasting the potential of young people in crime and violence.

In conclusion, the Government of Iraq reiterates its rejection of all forms of violence, extremism and terrorism. We support the efforts of the international community to eliminate those phenomena. We must focus on young people and their future by combating terrorism and its dangers. They have the right to enjoy life. We must respond to their ideas and meet their needs, as well as continue talking with them about their role in building the future.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Denmark.

Mr. Liisberg (Denmark): It is a privilege to take part in this open debate on youth, peace and security.

We welcome the progress study (see S/2018/86) and would like to applaud the participatory process in which thousands of young people have been engaged.

Denmark is a strong supporter of resolution 2250 (2015), and therefore part of the Youth Champion Group on the resolution. We have also sponsored a United Nations Development Programme study on youth's role in supporting peace and stability, which has informed the progress study we see before us today.

The reason for Denmark's strong support is simple: we firmly believe that global youth has huge potential as peacebuilders and agents of positive change, and we find it crucial to unleash that potential. We also have to look at risk, because if we do not listen to the youth, they may be a source of instability and conflict.

Youth all around the world deserve a bright future and to live in a safe, free and prosperous world in which fundamental human rights are respected. Youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, they are also crucial partners of today, as many have said. Engaging youth as essential stakeholders in peace processes and in policy development in general is a way to reinforce legitimacy and effectiveness.

In November, Côte d'Ivoire was host to a summit between the European Union and the African Union with the headline of investing in youth. It was a very successful summit. I think part of the reason for that was that we managed to agree that the summit should include youth in the discussions and in determining the solutions to the challenges they face.

The adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) was a historic milestone. The clear normative focus and political strength of the resolution is crucial, but it is not enough in itself. The true value lies in the success of its implementation. Our goal today must be to build a stronger common understand of how we can translate resolution 2250 (2015) into action. We must ask ourselves how we can create results on the ground for the millions of young people who are affected by armed conflict but are limited in contributing to the solutions.

Allow me to mention an example. In Mali, Denmark supports a youth organization called Think Peace. The organization works on anti-radicalization and countering violent extremism. Based on a mapping exercise, Think Peace has come up with concrete recommendations to Governments, political parties and civil society on how to mitigate conflict and violent confrontations during the upcoming presidential elections in Mali. We need more initiatives like that one, where young people are meaningfully engaged in finding the solution.

Let me conclude by repeating the main message: youth are crucial agents of change. Together, across generations, we must unlock that potential and give youth the best possible conditions for them to promote peace and security. That is our call for action today — to ensure that meaningful youth engagement in peace processes become mainstreamed simply because it brings about change and because it can create lasting peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

Mr. García Moritán (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First, I would like to thank the Government of Peru through you, Mr. President, for its initiative to organize this debate on the theme of youth, peace and security. We also thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and Mr. Simpson, Ms. Pierre-Antoine and Ms. Ekomo-Soignet for their informative briefings.

Argentina has from the outset embraced the Secretary-General's new emphasis on conflict prevention and the development of the concept of sustainable peace or sustaining peace — a narrative in which young people and women have an essential role. Our country recognizes that peace and security are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. We recognize the important role of youth in conflict prevention and resolution and as a key aspect to the sustainability, inclusivity and success of peacebuilding and the maintenance of peace activities. That is why we support the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015), which promotes young people, at the international level, being instruments of peace, dialogue and understanding and fight against poverty, violence and intolerance.

Argentina believes that armed conflict hampers educational and employment opportunity for young people, who are vulnerable and are often exposed to dangerous situations that impede their development and affect their schooling. It is estimated that approximately 300,000 armed children and young people live in conflict zones. They are victims, forced into a situation that is an ongoing violation of their rights, and are subject to recruitment, mutilation, abduction, sexual violence, attacks against schools and hospitals and a denial of humanitarian aid.

In addition to suffering violations of their most basic human rights, young people are affected psychologically and socially, which inhibits their development. They can lose access to education and other age-appropriate activities. They can experience feelings of guilt or a normalization of violence if they have joined an armed group — either voluntarily or by force — or if they have witnessed or committed acts of extreme violence. In many cases, feelings of loss, rootlessness, sexual violence and addiction to toxic substances can also adversely affect their mental health.

In the context of conflict, many young people are drafted into military service or participate in war-related illicit subeconomies. Often they are forcefully recruited and, in other cases, are motivated by cultural, social, economic and political pressures, since the informal economy linked to conflicts can sometimes offer work and social opportunities that are seen as preferable to poverty and hunger.

We must pay greater attention to the root causes of conflicts and the importance of finding solutions based on national participation in which young people can play a significant role in conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace — if they are guaranteed an inclusive environment through the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In its participation in the Economic and Social Council, Argentina has maintained that the Peacebuilding Commission serves a bridging and advisory role between the Organization's peace and security efforts and efforts related to development, human rights and humanitarian assistance. In line with that view, we believe that the Commission, in its active role of supporting the Security Council, can highlight the contribution of young people during the design and evaluation stages of the mandates of peacekeeping operations, especially in their peacebuilding phases. In that context, Argentina supports UNICEF's call for urgent progress in efforts to protect children and young people affected by conflict through the development of national legislation, policies and actions to protect the youngest members of society.

Education is fundamental to peace, security, development and the full enjoyment of human rights. Continuous access to safe education helps to protect young people from the dangers of armed conflict. Education is not only a human right but also an essential protection mechanism for young people affected by armed conflict, helping them to reach their potential and to contribute to the building of stronger communities. In turn, ensuring the security of young people allows them to become relevant actors in reconstruction and post-conflict peacebuilding processes, which can take place more rapidly if the education sector has overcome the effects of war.

Recognizing that young people represent a large proportion of the civilians who are harmed by armed conflict and that the interruption of their access to education and economic opportunities has decisive consequences for lasting peace and reconciliation, in March 2017, together with Norway, Argentina organized the second International Conference on Safe Schools to raise general awareness of the seriousness of attacks against students, teachers, schools and universities and of the military use of schools and universities. The Conference was also intended to disseminate the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Preventing Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict, adopted in Oslo in May 2015.

Argentina believes that it is essential for young people to increase their meaningful and inclusive participation as future leaders of peacebuilding with a transformative potential, rather than engaging in violence. Young people clearly have an important role to play in developing their own future and in building peace. They should be involved in aid, recovery and reconstruction programmes and as part of transition and national reconciliation processes. Governments and civil society, including in partnership with the private sector, must harness the energy, ideas and experiences of young people in order to create a new post-conflict society.

Similarly, Argentina reaffirms what is set out in the Ibero-American Youth Pact with regard to boosting the role of young people as promoters of a culture of peace by establishing training programmes on violence prevention and conflict resolution. In that regard, Argentina promotes developing the ability and skills of young people, as well as creating jobs for them so that they can actively contribute to sustaining peace. Special youth employment and training plans and the development of human resources should form the basis of innovative rehabilitation and social reintegration programmes for young people in post-conflict situations, in particular children, young former

combatants, those with disabilities and those who have missed out on education opportunities.

Finally, we would like to emphasize that the ideals and energy of young people — who are key agents of social change, economic development and technological innovation in their communities — constitute an essential potential to help to prevent conflict and to participate in shaping lasting peace. We therefore believe that is appropriate to continue to deal with this issue in the framework of the Council and to continue to deepen knowledge about the relationship between the role of young people and maintaining, building and sustaining peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): Allow me begin by thanking you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting on this very critical issue.

We live in a world bestowed with the largest youth population in human history. While that is an asset for building a more prosperous future, it also presents us with the major challenge of facilitating their empowerment and of encouraging them to effectively participate in decision-making processes in all areas. At the same time, it would enable them to help to build and sustain peace, including by resisting and denouncing extreme ideologies.

In the past few years, extreme ideologies and terrorist groups have been the greatest threats to peace and security, with youth being their prime victims and targets for recruitment. Poverty, ignorance, injustice, apartheid policies, occupation, situations of armed conflict, marginalization and exclusion are the main factors that increase the vulnerability of youth and make them an easy target for radicalization and recruitment.

A recent pervasive xenophobic attitude, which in some countries borders on racism, is another major challenge that increases youth alienation throughout our world, which is interconnected by various means, such as migration and new communication technologies. Such tendencies provide breeding grounds for resentment, dispute and conflict.

To prevent youth marginalization and radicalization, we have no choice other than to try to encourage tolerance, invest in education and awareness-raising, alleviate poverty, end discrimination, liberate lands under occupation, in particular Palestinian land in our region, and effectively address conflict situations. Moreover, enhanced civic education and dialogue within and among communities and nations have an important role to play in raising our younger generation's awareness of the threat to peace and security and helping to foster an atmosphere of tolerance and civility. However, such actions should not to be taken from the top. At both the national and the international levels, youth need to be involved and encouraged to meaningfully participate in every relevant activity.

Safeguarding youth against the threat of radicalization through the abuse of modern technologies is also imperative. Online media platforms should be induced to act responsibly. They should not be a conduit for spreading extremist views among their mostly young audience and as a means of recruitment. The relevant companies should be responsible and increase their control of the content exchanged through their platforms. Should they shirk their responsibility, Governments have to intervene and act promptly to stop extremist online activities.

The strategy to which I referred would help to empower the next generation to lead the efforts against violent and extremist views and prevent it from falling prey to those who seek only to aggravate such challenges and cause further devastation and chaos.

In the context of Iran's unquestionable commitment to combating violent extremism, I am proud to recall that Iranian youth have been the most immune to the propaganda and recruitment activities of terrorist and extremist groups.

Allow me to conclude by recalling the importance of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its seventieth and seventy-second sessions on a world against violence and violent extremism, based on the initiative of the Iranian President. Those resolutions address, inter alia, the imperative of empowering young people to combat violent extremism.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bulgaria.

Mr. Sterk (Bulgaria): Allow me to start by thanking Peru for organizing today's open debate.

I would first like to underscore that Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement made earlier on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The Government of Bulgaria has identified youth engagement in peace and security as one of the key priorities of the political agenda of the current Bulgarian presidency of the Council of the European Union under the broader topic of the future of Europe and young people. Last week, Bulgaria hosted a major European youth conference, which provided a platform for a valuable exchange of ideas between Governments and young people with the aim of developing the new EU Youth Strategy through a participatory and inclusive process.

Bulgaria has a long tradition of actively involving young people in the development and implementation of policies and programmes that impact their lives, and of ensuring the meaningful participation of young people in all spheres of political and public life through broad and inclusive consultations. Youth empowerment and youth participation in decision-making are key priorities of the Government of Bulgaria, and my country continues to strongly advocate for the more substantial involvement of young women and men in global affairs as well, including through the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme, which Bulgaria has been successfully implementing over more than 10 years, thereby ensuring that young people have a say in global processes and that their voices are heard and taken into consideration.

For the first time in the history of humankind, young people represent a quarter of the world's population. They are therefore a tremendous peace and security dividend and a major human resource for development that should be mobilized to consolidate peace and prosperity across the globe. I should like to reiterate Bulgaria's full commitment to resolution 2250 (2015), which established the role of young people as partners for peace. Bulgaria welcomes the independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86) and the recommendations contained therein, especially the proposals for ensuring youth participation in decision-making and accountability processes at the United Nations and for annual reporting by the Secretary-General to the Security Council within the framework of annual open debates.

Bulgaria highly values the crucial role of civil society, especially youth and youth-led organizations and young volunteers, in amplifying the contributions of young people to peace and security, economic development and social cohesion, as highlighted also in the Study. In Bulgaria, we have many positive examples of young volunteers engaged in social initiatives, including those related to refugee integration, social entrepreneurship for persons with disabilities, human rights campaigns, sustainable development projects, etc.

Bulgaria believes that children and young people can be key agents of positive social change and actively promotes their human rights and their empowerment through education, which is crucial to building peaceful and inclusive societies. Young people have an important role to play in creating the foundation for peace in their communities and beyond. In that regard, I would like to highlight the importance of the continuation of education during armed conflict. Investing in young people by strengthening their educational opportunities and economic inclusion is instrumental in achieving the youth, peace and security agenda. Bulgaria supports these efforts both politically and through targeted funding. The largest part of Bulgaria's humanitarian and development assistance is aimed at providing support to children and young people in conflict-affected areas and ensuring the right to education in emergencies. In 2017, Bulgaria contributed €100,000 to the Education Cannot Wait global fund.

Bulgaria remains fully committed to the youth and peace and security agenda and supports an enhanced United Nations engagement with young people as equal and essential partners for peace. That will further strengthen young people's role and contribution to peace and security, thereby guaranteeing the durability of peace through generations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Romania in his capacity as Chair of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Neculăescu: I would like to thank you, Sir, for the opportunity to address the Security Council today in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). The PBC congratulates Peru on taking the initiative to organize this debate on an important and timely issue.

The PBC recognizes the indispensable role young people could play in any effort to build and sustain peace and welcomes the presentation of the independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), which offers insight into and an opportunity for Member States to analyse and review means of engaging with young people in the areas of peace and security, thereby enriching our discussions.

According to the study, the consistent exclusion young people experience and the mistrust they express for national and international authorities should be a wake-up call for all of us. The PBC notes that young people's favourable participation in peacebuilding is at the same time a right and a demographic necessity in making our societies more inclusive and peaceful. If we are to achieve inclusive, sustainable development and build and sustain peace, we simply cannot afford to lose the largest generation of young people the world has ever known. The PBC recognizes the importance of mainstreaming young women and men into peacebuilding and of seeing young people as partners to engage.

The PBC has heard directly from young people about their peacebuilding work in contexts as diverse as Burundi, Liberia, Kyrgyzstan and Solomon Islands, and has experienced first hand the resourcefulness and resilience of young people in the face of conflict and violence. We recognize that the majority of young people strive for peace and should be given meaningful opportunities to participate in peacebuilding efforts.

The study says that trust in, not fear of, youth must guide our work. That means giving youth the right opportunities and ensuring that quality education is available at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including in refugee and displaced settings. It also means providing young people with appropriate employment opportunities.

The PBC expresses its support for peacebuilding initiatives with positive reflections undertaken by young women and men in conflict-affected countries. Such activities are often launched with limited funding assistance and recognition by national and international actors alike. The PBC recognizes that a lack of adequate funding of youth-led organizations, in part because of the challenges youth organizations face in accessing existing funding streams, limits the contribution young people make to peaceful societies. Significantly, initiatives such as the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Gender and Youth Promotion Initiative allocated nearly $50 million dollars to youth and peacebuilding programmes in the past two years, including direct funding to non-governmental organizations. Some 40 per cent of the budget was allocated to local civil society organizations. We also welcome PBF efforts that promote initiatives supporting the involvement of young people as contributors to political processes.

The PBC encourages the Security Council to take into account the role young people could play in peacebuilding. The PBC intends to continue and expand its direct engagement with young people both in the countries and regions it supports and in its meetings here in New York.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): Germany aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union, and we thank Peru for this timely open debate a day prior to the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace. We also thank the briefers for their valuable input. I would like to make three brief points.

First, on the participation of young people in peace and security, peace agreements fail when they are not inclusive, in particular when leaders, mostly male, conclude power-sharing agreements without taking into account the interests of the entire population. That must change. In some cases, it is already changing. One example of where Germany is working to effect such change is in South Sudan. In the framework of the peace negotiations led by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), we emphasize a complementary, bottom-up approach that includes youth. Specifically, the Berghof Foundation, a mediation partner for Germany, has repeatedly involved representatives and organizations of youth and women in Kampala to channel their concerns and visions for a peaceful South Sudan into the IGAD-led High-Level Revitalization Forum peace talks in Addis Ababa.

As another example, as just mentioned by the representative of Romania, we were also very pleased to hear directly from young people from Burundi, Liberia, Kyrgyzstan or Solomon Islands in the Peacebuilding Commission. As a final example, Germany also supports the African Women Leaders Initiative, led by the African Union, which has a specific mentoring component for young women.

Secondly, with respect to preventing violent extremism, we must gain a better understanding of why young people drift towards extremist groups and what the triggers are. One excellent study on this topic, entitled *Journey to Extremism in Africa*, was published by the United Nations Development Programme late last year. While the report identifies several triggers for youth involvement in extremism, I would like to

highlight one observation in particular. Some 71 per cent of the study's respondents indicated that they had been driven to join extremism by Government action, including the killing of a family member or friend or the arrest of a family member or friend. Therefore, while structural factors play a role in radicalization, it is also clear that the actions of Governments and their security forces are another major, sometimes preventable cause. For Germany, that means that when we counter violent extremism and engage in counter-terrorism activities as Member States, we must ensure that all our actions comply with our international human rights obligations. Only this can ensure their effectiveness in the long term.

Thirdly and finally, with respect to seeing the positive potential of youth, we have to do more to highlight the overwhelmingly positive influence of young people on our societies, and we can promote this positive influence by focusing on youth training and employment. Employment is a fundamental driver of economic development, and it is the best method of poverty reduction. Decent work is the basis for socioeconomic participation and enables young people to have independent lives.

But more private-sector dynamism is needed to create new jobs. Germany has launched a number of initiatives in cooperation with the private sector worldwide. In this regard, we work on employment-effective business and cooperation models, demand-oriented training and further education, as well as upscaling and learning initiatives. In the same vein, during Germany's 2017 presidency of the Group of 20 (G-20), members developed the G-20 Initiative for Rural Youth Employment. Allow me to take this opportunity to call upon members of the business community to do their part to harness the positive potential of youth.

In conclusion, it is clear that young people's role in sustaining peace is paramount. We must do more to include them at the United Nations, and we must do more to put issues that are relevant to young people on the agenda of the United Nations. Allow me to assure the Security Council that if elected as a non-permanent member of the Council for the 2019-2020 term, Germany would do its utmost to implement the youth, peace and security agenda and continue to work with young peacebuilders to secure sustainable peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiolea (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to express our gratitude to Peru for convening today's open debate, to the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth for her briefing, and to Mr. Graeme Simpson for his presentation of the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86), which reaffirms the important and positive role of young women and men in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. We have carefully considered the recommendations contained in the study on how to derive greater benefit from the contributions of young people in conflict prevention and resolution, as reflected in resolution 2250 (2015). We look forward to the final version of the document next September.

We are at a turning point for humankind, for never before in history have there been so many young people as now. With 1.8 billion young men and women worldwide, equivalent to 24 per cent of the world's population, it is clear that sustainable peace and development, as well as global governance, must include comprehensive consideration of the needs and aspirations of young people, as well as their active participation in society.

In an increasingly global world, stereotypes that link youth and violence are propagated and generalized. The stigmatization of young people is characterized by clichés of young men tearing apart the social fabric and blocking peace, or of young women as victims or invisible actors with no capacity for action. Young people are often perceived as threats and as part of the problem. In contrast, the image that we should promote is that of young people committed to finding solutions and as agents of change, partners for peace and promoters of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in every community and every city.

The interconnected world provides opportunities that the United Nations and Governments must seize. Young people are fulfilling their aspirations through access to information sources. The political, economic and social exclusion of young people, as well as from justice and education, is the challenge we must overcome. Removing obstacles is essential to unlocking the potential of youth in promoting peaceful and inclusive societies.

The United Nations Development Programme indicates that poverty, lack of development opportunities

and marginalization, not religious ideology, are among the main causes of young people joining extremist groups. Integrating young people as the main promoters of the Sustainable Development Goals is a clear action with enriching and forward-looking results for all communities. At present, the lack of data makes it difficult to accurately estimate the contributions of youth to conflict prevention and resolution, as well as to post-conflict situations. That is why we call for the closing of information gaps so as to incorporate this data into the political decision-making process.

We must therefore promote and strengthen sustainable peace in our communities through investment in education, job training and the creation of sources of decent work for young people, guaranteeing the full exercise of their rights and avoiding situations such as the intergenerational reproduction of poverty, scenarios of increased insecurity and the lack of social cohesion. The participation and comprehensive consideration of the needs and perspectives of young women deserves special mention, bearing in mind that communities based on gender equity generally have a healthier, more equitable and inclusive social fabric, in which the same human rights are promoted and respected for all, and this makes them more resilient to all kinds of conflict and violent expression. We must continue to promote actions at the national and international levels to empower women at all stages of their lives.

Mexico is addressing the needs of young people through its National Youth Programme, which has provided institutional responses to guarantee the social rights of 37.9 million young Mexicans. In Mexico, the National Inclusion Strategy seeks to contribute to access to social rights and the reduction of deprivation through efficient coordination of public policies and programmes. We have also aligned the objectives of the National Youth Programme with the national goals set out in the National Development Plan through the promotion and coordination of actions to strengthen the social participation of young people, as well as their access to education, work, housing and health.

The Federal Public Administration of Mexico, in conjunction with the Mexican Institute of Youth, carries out Government interventions for specific aspects of peace. Some examples are the National Programme for Adolescent Health Care; the National Programme for Public Security, which seeks to coordinate interinstitutional linkages and incorporate a youth perspective into the dissemination of National Security Commission strategies; the scholarship programme for victims of crime and human rights violations; the National Plan for the Prevention of Abuse and Violence against Children and Adolescents; and the Programme to Fight Discrimination and Hate Speech on the Internet among young people.

Resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, has contributed to the normative strengthening of this agenda, changing the way young people see themselves in conflict. The challenge is to follow up on the actions taken by the Member States and the United Nations system to achieve their effective implementation. We are confident that millions of young people around the world are waiting to be invited to become agents for the promotion of the Sustainable Development Goals. The young people of the twenty-first century are global citizens who want to do their utmost to build societies that are increasingly just, inclusive, equal and prosperous.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Spain.

Mr. Moragas Sánchez (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union a few minutes ago.

At the outset, I would like to thank the Peruvian presidency of the Security Council for convening today's debate. I thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Wickramanayake, and the Lead author of the independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), Mr. Simpson, for their briefings.

Spain is a member of Champions of Youth and is firmly committed to resolution 2250 (2015), which it sponsored. We firmly believe that young people have enormous potential to promote international peace and security and prevent violent radicalization processes, to which they are particularly vulnerable. It is for that reason that my country commends the study and its recommendations. Spain is developing concrete measures to ensure that young people have forums and tools that allow them to play a positive role in prevention and mediation efforts, the maintenance and promotion of peace and security and the fight against violent extremism. The current political, economic and social challenges we all face further reinforce the importance of ensuring that young people play an active role in the promotion of peace, stability and prosperity in their

societies. That is vital in order to build communities with greater capacity and resilience to respond to the dynamic nature of radicalization, extremism and rhetoric that incite hatred and intolerance.

Our young people are extremely vulnerable to those threats and we must develop innovative policies and programmes that foster the political participation and activism of the 1.8 billion young people throughout the world. To that end, we must speak their vernacular. It is not enough to provide forums for young people. They have their own voice and it is essential that they be heard and that their perspective be included in the political and social debate. Democracy and human rights must be strengthened as we combat radicalization and intolerance. Only in that way can we restore the trust of young people in institutions and ensure that they work to improve and strengthen them, thereby granting full legitimacy to State policies.

Nationally, Spain is strongly committed to improving mechanisms for young people participating in public affairs, in particular in public policy review processes. In that regard and as part of the European Structured Dialogue for young people, for the first time the decision was taken to include, along with policy-makers, the heads of other ministries whose functions cover key issues that affect young people, such as the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration and the Ministry of Housing. We must underscore the participation of young people in review processes that examine progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is being implemented in Spain.

Various actors participate in that process, including young people, through the various participatory mechanisms. At the same time, action is being taken to enhance the skills of those working on the issue of youth, through dual training, so that they can detect and intervene early to prevent the violent radicalization of young people, through informal and formal education mechanisms. We have also been working in collaboration with youth organizations to improve employment conditions for young people so that they can obtain decent jobs, for example, through the official recognition of skills and abilities acquired in informal education mechanisms or through various talent-development initiatives for young people, whose contribution to society will be key to its development. In the same vein, Spain launched its Young Talent Programme this year. The Programme seeks to provide a positive environment for young people in which they can develop their talent through the recognition and support of their endeavours in various areas.

Spain knows that none of this will be achieved without a gender approach. It is essential that we do not break the link with the women and peace and security agenda. There has been a shift from women being considered as mere victims to being viewed as vital actors in conflict prevention and resolution and subsequent reconstruction efforts. Young women have an enormous potential to contribute to peacebuilding.

At the European level, Spain leads the agenda of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on youth and peace and security and chairs the Group of Friends of Youth and Security. In May 2017, an OSCE conference was held in Málaga, under the theme "Working with Youth for Youth: strengthening security and cooperation online". Ministers, other eminent persons and, above all, more than 200 young people from 61 countries attended the conference. They adopted the Málaga Youth Declaration, which reflects the recommendations of resolution 2250 (2015) and makes a key contribution to the fight against radicalization, the prevention of extremism, the promotion of tolerance and the fight against misinformation online.

Spain wishes to do more. That is why it has joined the United Nations Youth Delegate Programme. We are committed to strengthening the role of young people in the implementation and review of Spain's multilateral policy, as well as to helping inform young people about issues addressed at the United Nations so that their views are always taken into account. The implementation of policies geared towards the greater participation of young people in various areas in Spain is due not only to its compliance with certain international obligations, but also to the firm belief that the participation of our young people will ensure sustainable public policies. Young people will not only benefit; they will be key actors now and in the future.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I give the floor to the representative of Colombia.

Mr. Gonzalez (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Sir, for convening today's open debate. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Mr. Simpson, the lead author of the independent progress study on youth and

peace and security (see S/2018/86), and civil society representatives for their briefings.

We welcome today's open debate, held during a week that coincides with the holding of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace and the report to be presented by the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the subject on Wednesday. The progress study on youth and peace and security prepared by Mr. Simpson, pursuant to resolution 2250 (2015), provides an opportunity for us to review its findings and recommendations and to share our views on the ways that Member States can implement the youth and peace and security agenda. We welcome the fact that a Colombian expert contributed to the drafting of the study.

Let me give a brief overview of some of our country's experiences in implementing resolution 2250 (2015), which mirrors some of the recommendations of the study in terms of more education, an increase in the number of jobs and a boost in social capital. Colombia applied these measures with equal vigour even before the implementation of the peace process and in the very same context.

According to the study, education was universally recognized as a key theme of interest in peace and security for young people, demonstrating the crucial importance of education for young people of both genders around the world. In Colombia, we guarantee free education from kindergarten to grade 11, and we have incentivized access to higher education. In seven years, we increased access to higher education by 14 per cent. Similarly, we have implemented a national programme that provides the best high school students with access to the best private universities in the country through a Government grant. That programme has benefited more than 40,000 students. As the study indicates, we want to provide a values-based education for peace, and teach critical thinking skills and non-violent methods of conflict resolution, with special attention to the celebration of diversity.

With regard to employment, I would note Colombia's awareness-raising campaigns to promote decent work policies, with the aim of promoting the creation of new jobs and the training and protection of workers so that, through these campaigns, local authorities can learn how to take the opinions of young people into account when formulating policies that will have a long-term impact. As an example of this, we have eliminated the need to present military identification as a condition of first employment — an obstacle to young people gaining access to their first job in Colombia. Employers can now offer jobs without that requirement. Obviously, peacebuilding in Colombia is what makes it possible for these and other measures to be considered by the Administration. All those efforts have led Colombia to achieve significant economic and social progress, with policies targeting vulnerable groups, such as young people — especially by focusing on combating informality in the labour force.

Finally, with regard to the strengthening of social capital in Colombia, we have understood that peacebuilding requires an expansion of democracy that allows for new voices to enrich the political debate on Colombia's problems, to strengthen pluralism and the representation of the different visions and interests of society, and to provide guarantees for political participation and inclusion.

If we are to avoid new conflicts or recurrence, we must tackle not only the challenge of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes, but also of bolstering our democratic culture and institutions in order to regain the confidence of the population in State institutions. That is precisely where the role of youth is so important. We must risk thinking differently and move towards the transformations we have sought as a society. The peace process is designed for young people, so that they can free themselves from the burden of more than 50 years of war and propose new ways of living together. We need to work on the issue of trust in the regions. That is what young people have to work on — how to bridge the gap between Colombians. The best way to make a change is to open up scenarios for dialogue, change the way we interact with each other and promote environments free of discrimination.

With the recent approval by our Congress of the youth citizenship statute, we are committed to promoting the organization of this population group so that it can establish youth groups, community organizations and others that will allow them participate effectively in our society. For example, their views on the priority investments of their community resources will be taken into account. Young people will have privileged representation. In other words, we are empowering young people right now to help them build a better future for themselves. And we are sure that with that law we will strengthen the capacity of young people to do just that.

The recurrent use of force as a means of resolving conflicts, at the expense of diplomacy and the peaceful settlement of disputes, has only contributed to furthering violence and bolstering extremism. Our actions must provide our young people with options and give them the tools to promote peace and isolate practices that generate conflict. We reiterate our commitment to a multidimensional response to the challenges posed by extremism and remain convinced that cooperation and dialogue within the United Nations framework will enhance our capacity to combat this scourge.

We will only succeed if we join efforts on the basis of common values and strengthen multilateral cooperation.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Hoshino (Japan): Let me first extend my deepest appreciation to the briefers and all those who participated in compiling the progress study. I thank Mr. Simpson for his hard work. As the study emphasizes, it is important to recognize youth as key stakeholders in peace and security, while ensuring their protection from all forms of violence.

The study calls for the international community as a whole to overcome stereotypes that tend to view young men as violent perpetrators and potential threats to peace and young women as passive victims of violence. I could not agree more. Japan has advocated for the active participation and contributions of young people to peace and security based on the human security approach, which has two main strategies — empowerment and the protection of those in need, including young people.

We need to make many more conscious efforts to empower young people. As the study points out, the voices of our young people are not fully or frequently reflected in important decision-making processes. Cases are found in which young women and sexual minorities are even disempowered by being deprived of access to power and resources, not to mention opportunities for political participation. In that regard, Japan is working to empower young people by providing training and educational opportunities and creating an enabling environment for them to demonstrate their leadership and innovative ideas.

In the field of peacebuilding, Japan has been training civilian experts from Asia, the Middle East and Africa through the Global Peacebuilders Program, which particularly welcomes youth participants with diverse backgrounds. In that connection, I would like to introduce the case of Ms. Ayan Mohamud Osman, a young female officer from the Government of Somalia who participated in the training course in 2017. Carrying the spirit of her colleagues who lost their lives in tragic terrorist attacks in Mogadishu, she was proactive throughout the course and is now employed by the Government as a stabilization and peacebuilding assistant in order to engage in creating peace in her country. Japan is pleased that the programme has trained hundreds of highly motivated young participants, both from Japan and from conflict-affected regions and countries, who are now empowered as professional peacebuilders with a strong sense of responsibility and initiative for peace and security. Japan continues to support their future success.

The protection of young people is, of course, important as they face armed conflicts, terrorism and gender-based violence. I would like to call attention to the mental health care for young people, in addition to their physical health, as it tends to be less prioritized. Japan believes that psychosocial support for young people is imperative for peacebuilding and reconstruction.

In that context, the Government of Japan is pleased to note that a project in support of youth in the Central African Republic is being implemented with the financial support of the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, to which Japan is a principal donor. This project is led by the United Nations Development Programme, with a number of other United Nations organs — the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, UNICEF, the United Nations Population Fund, the International Organization for Migration, UN-Women, UNESCO and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic — joining forces to implement the project to support the local effort of the people of the Central African Republic. The project is designed to integrate youth, improve the delivery of and access to basic social services, enhance sustainable livelihoods and promote social cohesion.

In addition to that, it should be noted that the project includes providing medical and psychological care and protection to women and girls who have survived sexual violence. We hope that the project will enhance the security of the people of the Central African Republic, including young people, through the nexus of peace, development and human rights in practice.

The study reflects the voices raised by thousands of young people. We should respond to those voices by taking into account the recommendations in the study with regard to the planning and implementation of peace- and security-related policies. Young people are key stakeholders in sustaining the peace and development of a country. The starting point of their journey must include their protection and empowerment.

In that regard, ending violence and achieving negative peace is not enough. The elimination of social inequality and injustice must be incorporated in order to realize positive peace. Based on the concept of human security, Japan continues to be committed to the realization of a world where youth are much better protected and are fully empowered.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Ireland.

Mr. O'Toole (Ireland): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important debate. At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Graeme Simpson and the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, as well as the representatives of the FRIDA Young Feminist Fund and the Organisation URU for their valuable briefings.

Ireland also aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier on behalf of the European Union.

In 2015, Jordan took the far-sighted step of putting the issue of youth on the agenda of the Security Council. The adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) was a landmark moment for the inclusion of youth and the recognition of their capacity to be change-makers and to contribute positively to sustaining peace.

Ireland was proud to provide funding to the progress study on resolution 2250 (2015), presented to the Council today by Mr. Simpson (see S/2018/86). We are particularly impressed by the thorough consultative process undertaken in conducting the study. In line with the recommendations made in the progress study, Ireland calls for the Secretary-General to report annually to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015). Ireland also thinks that it would be useful for a Council focal point on youth, peace and security to be appointed in order to mainstream the issue across the Council's agenda.

Ireland urges States not to treat the youth, peace and security agenda as a new silo. This agenda has obvious synergies with the women, peace and security agenda and resolution 1325 (2000), as well as the Sustainable Development Goals and the human rights agenda. As Chair of the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-second session, Ireland was pleased to see the agreed conclusions outline the role of youth-led organizations in strengthening the collective voice of women and girls. That is important as we work to challenge the perception of young women as passive victims of conflict.

The youth, peace and security agenda is also an important component of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture. The progress study makes important recommendations about the role of youth in conflict prevention and in sustaining peace. While it is true that young men can be vulnerable to radicalization, young people can also play a positive role in preventing conflict and countering terrorism. Ireland urges States to really consider the recommendations made in the progress study in order to move beyond mere lip service about youth. We do not need to give young people a voice — they already have one. It is up to States to empower their inclusion in peacebuilding processes.

Recently, Ireland marked the twentieth anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, the touchstone of the peace process in Northern Ireland. We know all too well how the trauma of conflict can pass down through generations. The youth, peace and security agenda is therefore a core issue for Ireland. In 2015, Ireland established a United Nations youth delegate programme, whereby two youth delegates are appointed annually to participate in the General Assembly session. Our youth delegates have carried out a survey of young people in Ireland, which found that while young people recognized the value of fostering peace worldwide, they continued to feel marginalized from discussions around such processes. Our youth delegates noted that there were many conversations about young people, rather than with young people. That echoes the comments made in the progress study that young people should not be on the table, but around the table. Ireland's youth delegates encourage Member States to adopt similar youth delegate programmes and to include young people in their delegations to the General Assembly.

When we discuss the women, peace and security agenda here at the United Nations, we often say that sustainable peace is not possible when half the population of a society — that is, women — are excluded. That is also true of youth. Sustainable peace simply cannot exist without the meaningful inclusion of

young people. They are not the future or the leaders of tomorrow. Young people are the present and the leaders of today.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, United Nations High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations.

Mr. Al-Nasser: The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations is honoured to be a member of the Steering Committee for the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86) mandated by resolution 2250 (2015). I commend the work of Mr. Graeme Simpson and the Advisory Group of Experts, including the Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth. In preparation for that study, they turned words into deeds through inclusive and informed consultations with more than four thousand young people from a diverse set of countries and regions.

Empowering youth lies at the heart of international peace and security. The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations has long recognized the important and positive contribution of youth and youth-led organizations to conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. Allow me to use this opportunity to speak very briefly about three of our initiatives that feed into this vein.

First, our Young Peacebuilders programme is a peace education programme that supports youth leaders and their organizations in gaining skills that enhance their positive role in peace and security issues. It also brings visibility to projects initiated by young people for peace and the promotion of human rights and cultural diversity. Last year, it took place in West Africa. This year, we implemented the programme in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Secondly, our Youth Solidarity Fund (YSF) is a programme that provides youth-led organizations with seed funding and capacity-building to implement innovative and effective projects in the context of intercultural and interfaith dialogue. We have funded projects in Asia, Africa and the Middle East in areas affected by inter-ethnic tensions, conflict and violent extremism. More than 700 applications from 79 countries were received in the 2018 application period for the YSF.

Thirdly, through our fellowship programme, we provide a platform for young civil society leaders from the Middle East, Europe and North Africa to experience immersive visits in each other's regions. The theme of this year's programme is the role of young people in peacebuilding and in preventing violent extremism. We have received applications from hundreds of motivated young people and, as in previous years, their experience and expertise are remarkable.

Recognizing the role of new technology and digital platforms for the dissemination of information, and as part of our media and information literacy initiatives, the Alliance of Civilizations has developed PEACEapp, a series of workshops aimed at the strategic use of applications and videogaming platforms to build peaceful understanding among individuals from different cultural and religious backgrounds.

The Alliance remains committed to working with Member States, members of the Steering Committee and all other partners and stakeholders to provide young people with platforms and opportunities to achieve sustainable peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

Mrs. Bernal Prado (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Peru for convening this open debate, which gives us an opportunity to analyse the significant contribution young people make to efforts to maintain and promote peace and security, as well as the role they can play in conflict prevention and resolution.

We appreciate the contributions made to this debate. In particular, we thank Mr. Graeme Simpson and his team for the independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86). Our country sponsored and participated in the drafting of resolution 2250 (2015), which was proposed by Jordan, during our membership in the Council in 2015.

Chile values the recommendations made in the study. It highlights the initiatives young people around the world have undertaken towards peace and urges Governments and international actors to recognize young people as the missing peace. That is in line with Sustainable Development Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which promotes peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, as well as Sustainable Development Goal 4, which, among its goals, recommends an inclusive and quality education for a culture of peace and non-violence with respect to human rights, gender equality and an appreciation of cultural diversity.

We highlight the synergies between resolution 1325 (2005) — and subsequent resolutions on the women and peace and security agenda — and resolution 2250 (2015), given the important role that young women play as agents of change and forgers of peace. In that regard, we urge the system to consider such synergies in the definition of its actions, as well as the link with the Vancouver Principles, which cover the situation of children in armed conflict.

A few days ago, the Secretary-General pointed out that it is necessary to consider youth not as a threat, but as an enormous potential for our world, especially in our search for peace, development, justice and respect for human rights. Consistent with that policy, our country supports the initiatives and recommendations related to sustaining peace, such as including advisers on the protection of children and youth in peacekeeping missions and operations. We also recall the important role of the Arms Trade Treaty and subregional initiatives to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as the implementation of resolution 2143 (2014), co-sponsored by Chile.

The role of education in the future of our children and youth is indisputable. We must therefore contribute to promoting and protecting that right, even in conflict and post-conflict situations. Chile has joined the Safe Schools Declaration and urges an evaluation of the Lucens Guidelines in that regard. Critical infrastructure, such as hospitals and educational centres, must be protected in accordance with international law in times of peace and conflict. The well-being of young people and their positive inclusion in society will depend on it.

At the regional level, in 2016, Chile adhered to the Ibero-American Youth Pact, which creates a political, economic and social alliance that promotes the integral development of young people in order to reverse the different forms of exclusion that may affect them.

At the national level, our country has established the National Institute for Youth, a public body that proposes and promotes programmes for young people. In that regard, I would highlight grants for initiatives in the areas of human rights, equality, inclusion, integration and non-discrimination. We have also set up a volunteer network at the national level and a youth volunteer programme within the Pacific Alliance.

We would also like to highlight the recent establishment of an office on childhood in the Ministry for Social Development, dedicated to ensuring comprehensive protection. That measure, which gives continuity to work undertaken by the previous Government, will allow the State to have access to a dedicated institutional framework for coordinating public services directed at children. Experience shows that youth participation and inclusive development are paramount if we want to help to build a more peaceful, safe and just world for all.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Zaayman (South Africa): South Africa welcomes the convening of this meeting, and expresses its appreciation to Peru for furthering the debate on the important matter of youth, peace and security.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The role of youth in relation to peace and security is of particular importance to the African continent, where some estimates indicate that 60 per cent of the population on the continent are under the age of 25.

South Africa recalls the initiative of Jordan, which, during its tenure in the Security Council in 2015, ushered in the landmark resolution 2250 (2015) — the first resolution on youth, peace and security. It underscored the importance of youth as active positive agents in the maintenance of international peace and security, and not reactive elements fuelling conflict.

South Africa welcomes the independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86), and the sterling work of its lead author, Mr. Graeme Simpson, as well as the team constituting the Advisory Group of Experts. Of particular interest to our delegation was the emphasis placed on the positive role that youth can play in peacebuilding and sustaining peace as envisaged in resolution 2250 (2015) and subsequent resolutions, including resolution 2282 (2016). Those resolutions reaffirm the importance of youth in the deterrence and resolution of conflicts and their role in sustainability, inclusiveness and the success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts.

The progress study on youth, peace and security reveals the variety of ways in which young people contribute to sustaining a broader concept of peace that entails not just the end of violence, but the strengthening of societies susceptible to the resurgence of violent conflict, and their addressing their political grievances

through legitimate and peaceful political channels. In that regard, South Africa supports the recommendation that, in order to fully harness and support the innovation of young people's contribution to peace, there is a need to invest in young people's capabilities, redress the structural barriers that limit youth participation in peace and security, and emphasize partnerships and collaborative action, where young people are viewed as equal and essential partners for peace.

South Africa has acknowledged the role played by the youth as agents of change, as they were instrumental in advancing the goals of the broader struggle for liberation and democracy in our country. Young people who were often at the front lines of the battle for freedom are also now at the forefront of combating poverty, inequality and unemployment in South Africa. The South African Government has therefore made the empowerment of youth central to its development agenda and has set up programmes dedicated to their education, job creation and development. President Ramaphosa has also identified our country's most pressing challenge as youth unemployment. In that regard, South Africa is harnessing the potential of our young people and drawing them closer to the country's economic activity by launching the Youth Employment Service initiative. We have also established a youth working group that will ensure that all representatives of young people will have a say in the policies and programmes that are meant to promote their interests at the highest possible level.

My delegation has noted with concern that youth programmes tend to give priority to the roles of young men over those of young women in society, a problem that is only emphasized by the fact that young women are disproportionately targeted by sexual and gender-based violence. We should therefore ensure that the outcomes of today's meeting reinforce the work being done to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security.

Ultimately, we need to create an environment that can enable young people to contribute positively in society. We see young people as having the potential to be engines for growth and stability on our continent and in the rest of our world. An investment in them is an investment in future peace and prosperity and a guard against the interests of belligerent forces such as terrorist groups. We must harness young people's dynamism and positivity and build up their resilience in the face of sentiments that promote resorting to violence as a way to achieve misguided interests.

In conclusion, we have the potential to make meaningful change through investing in our young people and giving them a voice to determine their futures. We see today's open debate as just such an opportunity and look forward to an outcome that strengthens the resolve of the Security Council to maintain international peace and security by lifting up and harnessing youth in the pursuit of international peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Yemen.

Mr. Alyemany (Yemen) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate on youth, peace and security, which is an important topic for us all. We are well aware of the important resolutions adopted by the Security Council recently, focusing on investing young people's potential in the maintenance of international peace and security.

Young people constitute the majority of the world's population today, and youth constitutes the majority of the population in conflict affected-countries, including Yemen. We are well aware of the need to promote the positive contribution of young men and women by including them in efforts aimed at maintaining international peace and security. The international community must redouble its efforts to reach a better understanding of the important role that young people can play and to promote youth initiatives within the United Nations so as to ensure that their voices, ideas and initiatives are heard and that the United Nations becomes younger and belongs to the future.

For these reasons, the Security Council adopted resolution 2250 (2015), the first resolution of its kind on youth, peace and security. The resolution stresses the responsible role that youth can play in maintaining and promoting international peace and security. We thank the Secretary-General for commissioning the progress study on the implementation of the resolution, and we welcome the relevant report (see S/2018/86), including its recommendations.

I would like to contrast the youth of Yemen in 2011 and the youth of Yemen today. In 2011, young people were the essence of the revolution that started at Sana'a University, calling for change. However, today, in the

midst of the war launched by the Houthi militias, young people are in a disastrous and tragic situation. Since 2014, the Yemeni Government has consistently sought to seize all relevant options for achieving peace sponsored by the United Nations. I will not go into the details, except to say that we have made every effort to achieve the dream of the young Yemenis who took to the streets on the 11 February 2011 to call for a safe, prosperous and stable Yemen that incorporates all segments of society without discrimination or exclusion.

Since His Excellency President Hadi Mansour came to power in 2012, the Yemeni Government has focused its attention on young people because we believe in the role of youth in building peace and prosperity and in decision-making at all levels. A case in point was the National Dialogue Conference, held on 18 March 2013 under the theme "In dialogue we make the future", and supported by the United Nations, the region and the international community. It lasted 10 months, until 25 January 2014, during which time productive debates took place in which all segments of society participated.

One of the main achievements of the Conference was the broad participation of young people in its activities. The Conference called for 30 per cent representation of women and 20 per cent representation of youth in all Legislative, executive and judicial State bodies. The final document of the Conference called for the scientific, professional, political and economic empowerment of youth, providing them with the conditions necessary to build their potential and contribute to their society and their country. The final outcome document also called for amending Yemeni law to provide tax exemptions for all projects aimed at economically empowering youth and women and, specifically, to facilitate access to loans for women entrepreneurs and youth entrepreneurs. The final document of the Conference also called for the establishment of a Supreme Council for Youth that would play an oversight and steering role in adopting the necessary policies to protect youth from social dangers and violence, while launching new projects to develop the capacity and potential of young people, ensuring their participation in decision-making processes. The document also called for the adoption of measures to provide jobs for young men and women with a view to eliminating youth unemployment. The youth of Yemen participated in these decision-making processes and negotiations, which laid the foundation for peace and stability in the new, united Yemen.

Today, we are entering the fourth year of the Houthi insurgency against the legitimate Government of Yemen, after the Houthis usurped the Yemeni State in September 2014 by occupying the country's capital. The young people of Yemen today have had their dreams dashed after they took to the streets at the time of the revolution. The Houthi militias continue to commit the most heinous forms of violations against innocent youth and others by detaining and arresting activists, journalists, politicians and legislators. These unprecedented violations have crossed all religious, social and cultural red lines that had never been crossed before, even during the country's darkest times.

Over the past two and a half years, the Houthi militias have kidnapped and arrested 16,800 people, 80 per cent of whom are young people. They have not built educational institutions, cultural centres and health clubs. They have not undertaken rehabilitation projects with a view to providing political, financial, technical and intellectual support to young people. Instead, they have done something else. More than 484 Government buildings, health facilities, universities, schools and sports clubs, as well as households, have been transformed into detention centres.

Houthi militias have committed numerous violations against young people, including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detention, torture and media oppression, while transforming schools and hospitals into military centres. They have also planted mines on agricultural land, and recruited children and sent them to fight their wars. The young people of Yemen have lost every hope for a better future. Today they fight in order to make a living. They are forced to fight as part of the Houthi terrorist militias, Al-Qaida and Da'esh.

The young people and children of Yemen are fuel to the war launched by the Houthi militias against the Yemeni people. They are the majority of the victims among the combatants. The militias have been so cruel that they have even forced students to attend compulsory military training before sending them to fight. Children have become the focus of the Houthis now that young people have come to understand the gravity of the disaster and erroneous practices of the Houthi militias.

Can members of the Council imagine the future of Yemen's young people under the control of armed militias that act contrary to the will of the international community and international law? We call on the

international community to assume its legal and moral responsibility in the light of the violations committed against the young people of Yemen. We call on the international community to protect our young people in line with international treaties, the outcome of the National Dialogue Conference, the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and relevant Security Council resolutions, in particular resolution 2216 (2015). During all rounds of negotiations, the Yemeni Government has called for the release of all detainees, in particular young detainees, and immediate measures to improve the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

We take this opportunity to call on the Security Council not to reward those who have destroyed the dream of Yemen's young people, rejected all peace initiatives and sought to carry out a coup against the Yemeni Government. A democratic, federal Yemen — a Yemen that would exploit the full potential of its young people — is the dream of every Yemeni youth.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I remind Council members to limit their statements to a maximum of four minutes. If delegations have longer statements, they are kindly requested to deliver an abridged version in the Chamber and make the full written statement available to the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of Qatar.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank the Security Council, under the Peruvian presidency, for convening today's important debate.

I would like also to thank Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, for her valuable briefing and tremendous efforts. I further thank Mr. Graeme Simpson, lead author of the independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), for his efforts and the study's important conclusions and recommendations, which will help support children's ability to achieve international peace and security.

If we are to maintain international peace and security, concerted international efforts are needed to address the challenges and threats we face today as a result of poverty, conflicts and wars. There is no doubt that the 1.8 billion young men and women who make up the largest portion of the population of many countries throughout the world, in particular in conflict- and war-afflicted regions, are capable of facing such challenges and threats. They will make changes in their communities only if they are supported in seeking to achieve their ambitions and hopes and if such changes will enhance their protection and rights.

The adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) contributed to an increased recognition of the important role of young people in preventing conflicts and sustaining peace and fighting violent extremism and terrorism. The State of Qatar believes in the positive energy of young people and their ability to make positive changes in various areas, including international peace and security. Therefore, it has spared no effort to put in place policies and measures that can enhance the contribution of young people to peace and development efforts.

In 2017, the Qatari Advisory Committee on Youth was established in order to complement the efforts of the State to promote the role of young people in society and to implement the Qatar National Vision 2030. Twenty young men and women from various Government and non-Government entities were elected to the Committee, which seeks to enhance the culture of dialogue and participation among young people, enabling them to express their aspirations.

The State of Qatar acknowledges the importance of addressing the root causes of the violent extremism that leads to terrorism. In 2016, it organized a high-level thematic conversation of the General Assembly on children and youth affected by violent extremism. Several Member States participated. Important conclusions and recommendations were adopted with regard to protecting children and young people from violent extremism. Some States took measures to support efforts in that area, leading to the establishment of many institutions, programmes and initiatives in the fields of education, employment, economic empowerment, training and building the capacity of men and women at the national, regional and international levels, in particular in conflict-affected regions. Such initiatives include the World Innovation Summit for Education, the Upholding Education and Syrians Trust to educate and train Syrian refugees, and the Education Above All and Teach a Child initiatives, which all provide high-quality education for millions of children and young people around the world.

With regard to international cooperation, the State of Qatar provides support and cooperates with international organizations working on issues that affect youth and combat extremism. We are a founding member of the Global Community Engagement and

Resilience Fund, which supports local initiatives to build capacity and provide a counter-narrative to the ideology of violent extremism. The State of Qatar works with youth civil society organizations, including Silatech, a social organization, established in the State of Qatar in 2008, that supports activities aimed at providing job opportunities and enabling young people to participate in socioeconomic development. On 18 September 2017, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the State of Qatar, the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism and Silatech to build the capacity of young people in the Arab and Islamic region in the area of employment and to launch projects that protect them from violent extremism.

In conclusion, I reaffirm that the State of Qatar is committed to pursuing its efforts to create an enabling environment to assist young people by providing national, regional and international support to empower them in peacebuilding, promoting the culture of peace, tolerance and respect for religions. That will contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and benefit all peoples of the world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Ms. Furman (Israel): I would like to thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and other briefers for their briefings today.

Three years ago, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2250 (2015) on youth, peace and security. It was a landmark achievement representing our progress in including and prioritizing young people and their positive contributions to conflict resolution and to maintaining peace and security. We are gathered here today to build on that progress and to emphasize the role of young people as vital partners for peace. The youth of today are the world's largest-ever generation of young people. We must encourage their involvement in politics, economic development and conflict resolution. Their ideas, creativity and innovation will help build a better future for all.

Those efforts are even more critical in the face of terrorism and violent extremism. We must acknowledge that young people are often targets for radicalization and recruitment, but our approach must not be limited to countering violent extremism. We should rather encourage young people to become leaders for peace and security. We must understand that by including them as part of the solution we can help build their sense of belonging and purpose and improve their well-being and self-esteem. Such efforts will in turn lay the foundations for sustainable peace. We cannot allow terrorist groups to continue indoctrinating young people with hateful views and inciting them to violence. Groups such as Hamas in Gaza recruit youth to terrorist summer camps where they learn how to stab a Jew, plant an improvised explosive device and make a Molotov cocktail. Hamas is not alone in those lethal endeavours. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham exploits social media platforms in order to recruit young people from all over the world for terrorist activities. Poisoning young people's minds in these ways is pure evil. Let us ensure that summer camps continue to be just for play and social networks for uniting people.

In the understanding that young people are our most promising resource, Israel believes strongly in involving them in United Nations efforts and foreign-policy decision-making, which is why we have extended our youth delegate programme to three months at a time, so that our delegate can contribute to the work of our Mission and the United Nations on all three pillars — peace and security, development and human rights.

Israelis dedicated to involving young people in local, regional, national and international policy and efforts to build sustainable peace and security. Our approach is both top-down and bottom-up, and works to empower our young citizens through diverse frameworks. Israel's President, in collaboration with civil society, has initiated the Israeli Hope programme, which brings together Muslim, Jewish and Christian youth from across the country. This special programme aims to build common understanding and mutual respect for the cause of peace. Many of our efforts focus on building bridges and common understanding through joint activities, while others focus on economic development. We have seen the blossoming of joint ventures between Israeli and Palestinian youth in areas that range from peace and security to technology and innovation. In December, the non-governmental organization Games for Peace, which uses online video games as a platform for promoting tolerance and dialogue between Jewish and Arab schoolchildren, won the Intercultural Innovation Award of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. Such activities are key to building a foundation for sustainable peace.

Israel will continue in its efforts to close the gap between the youth population and young people's

representation in decision-making processes. Resolution 2250 (2015) is just the starting point. Let us listen to the voices of our young people. They matter.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Indonesia.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's important open debate on the very topical issues of on youth, peace and security. Indonesia welcomes the opportunity to continue to build on the Security Council's landmark resolution 2250 (2015). The overwhelming support for the resolution is a clear demonstration that we all consider the well-being and future of our young people to be a shared endeavour. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ms. Wickramanayake, Mr. Simpson, Ms. Pierre-Antoine and Ms. Ekomo-Soignet, and we have noted with interest all the excellent recommendations that have been made.

Today's young people are the most interconnected generation ever, and yet they are facing challenges that disrupt their potential to make a difference in their own lives and those of others. Many still have to strive to emerge from poverty and a lack of education, and to deal with issues such terrorism, violent extremism and transnational organized crime. Those challenges threaten communities' peace and stability and can even derail peacebuilding efforts or ignite new conflicts. In that regard, I would like to share Indonesia's views in the context of the five pillars of action of resolution 2250 (2015) — participation, partnerships, prevention, protection and disengagement.

First, we should promote inclusiveness, building a sense of belonging among our young people and making sure that they are an integral part of society. They should also be given a bigger role in preventing conflict and encouraging peace and development. Governments should invest more in creating environments where young people are empowered to take ownership, take control and exert a positive influence on the issues that matter to all of us.

Secondly, we must empower young people to be part of their societies and take on their role as full-fledged members of those societies, as well as protecting them from violent groups' recruitment and propaganda. It is a sad irony that in many cases, families and communities are the last to know about what their young members are thinking and doing. In our efforts to combat the radicalization of young people, we in Indonesia have been working consistently to encourage families and communities, together with grass-roots civil-society organizations, to actively engage their young people in developing programmes that deliver tailored interventions.

Thirdly, Governments should invest more in providing education, employment opportunities and skill development for young people in order to prevent them from being marginalized. Their optimism can turn to frustration when they cannot earn a living, and is often exploited by radical groups to fuel their own agenda. It is important to make young people the centre of our development efforts. There is no one-size-fits-all answer. The best strategy for generating work and training our young people is to focus on solutions that are tailored to local needs and to carefully design education programmes that nurture the values of tolerance, mutual respect and a culture of peace.

Fourthly, as the independent progress study (see S/2018/86) suggests, many of our young people would choose to reject a life of violence and crime if they could. That choice must be supported, and yet there are situations where young people are coerced into following the negative influences that may destroy their lives. As long as conflicts exist, they will continue to be fertile ground where extremists and radical groups will seek to recruit young people. That emphasizes the importance of working to find viable solutions for conflicts. We must ensure that repatriation and resettlement efforts, as well as rehabilitation and reintegration processes, are run smoothly and sustainably in both conflict and post-conflict situations. We should never allow our young people to take the path of violence and extremism.

In view of the large size of Indonesia's youth population, our Government has consistently worked to ensure that they are able to fully exercise their rights. In 2009 we enacted a youth law that serves as the legal foundation for integrating youth empowerment into our national development plan, which includes programmes for ensuring access to education, basic health services and young people's participation in public life and our decision-making processes, as well as in promoting human rights, including young people's rights. We also recognize the importance of fighting for the hearts and minds of our young people, encouraging dialogue and partnering with them to build strong communities that can counter the negative messages of extremism. We believe that young people play an important and positive role in the maintenance and promotion of international

peace and security. We should speak their language in addressing this issue, because they know what is best for them. Children are our future, and the future is in our hands. It starts today.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Panama.

Mr. Arrocha Ruiz (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking the Peruvian presidency for its initiative in proposing today's timely debate, a very significant one in the history of the Security Council, which draws our attention to the importance and need to ensure that we take greater responsibility for dealing with the challenge of the youth, peace and security agenda, to which my country is deeply committed. We listened with interest to Mr. Graeme Simpson's presentation of the independent progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86) and its recommendations, and we agree with his assessment that stigmatization and stereotypes have no place in that process. We also welcome the special call for inclusion in the statements by the youth leaders from Haiti and the Central African Republic.

Resolution 2250 (2015), which was adopted unanimously by the Security Council in 2015, is unquestionably one of our points of reference in recognizing the role that young people can and should play in preventing conflicts and violence and, even more so, in consolidating peace processes. It is therefore our duty to meet those expectations with concrete action and to lay the groundwork to promote the inclusion and participation of young people as strategic allies in building a safer and more just world.

In support of resolution 2250 (2015) and as a contribution to the progress study, in May 2017 Panama hosted the first regional consultation on youth, peace and security for the Latin American and Caribbean region, in which we welcomed the more than 60 young people who met to discuss a single agenda — preventing violence and conflict and promoting and strengthening peace. Beyond confirming the security challenges that young people are facing in Latin America and the Caribbean, the meeting demonstrated the potential of young people to make a concrete contribution to developing alternative mechanisms that involve them as dynamic actors in working to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We are also pleased to report that in March we welcomed the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth to Panama for a meeting putting in context young leaders' motivation and involvement in transforming the development agenda. As people have already said, the current generation of young people have a greater wealth of scientific and technological resources available to them than ever before, so our efforts to involve this generation must live up to the expectations of the globalized society that they are dealing with. We are also seeing how young people can be dangerously and damagingly exposed to transnational crime, including, most worryingly, terrorism networks.

Young people are clearly a priority for my Government. That is why we have committed to strengthening our national education and gender-equity agendas as factors that are extremely important to our society's homogeneous growths. To that end, we have developed a series of initiatives aimed at empowering our young people to become active stakeholders in formulating public policy. We know that investing in education and human capital is a determining factor in young people's development.

As you say in your concept note (S/2018/324, annex), Mr. President, the impact of conflict on young people is not homogeneous because the realities they encounter vary greatly depending on the region where they live. Today, well into the twenty-first century, we have seen with horror the rising numbers of young women who are victims of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse, especially in regions of armed conflict. In view of these global challenges, Panama is committed to its inter-institutional strategic youth plan for 2015 to 2019, which was specifically developed to improve young people's participation in conflict prevention and security efforts, with the support of non-traditional actors, civil society and private-sector stakeholders, in order to form a multisectoral alliance focused on the same goals.

By focusing on six fundamental areas, my country aims to ensure social inclusion through access to education, technology and job training; access to quality health care and a healthy environment; the prevention of violence; decent housing; equal opportunities and access to credit; and access to the arts, sports and culture, among other things. Through specific programmes such as Bilingual Panama, we are creating tools to give young people better opportunities in the workplace, while our universal grant programme is designed to help prevent school dropouts and in particular to ensure that everyone can obtain a primary

education. In addition, since prevention is the key to the success of such efforts, we have focused on renovating sports complexes, thereby fostering a culture of sport as a tool for promoting peace.

In January 2019, Panama will host World Youth Day, an event that seeks to build a better world by bringing together young people from all over the globe around the common objective of working to achieve a culture of peace by overcoming cultural and religious barriers. In the presence of Pope Francis, a leader in promoting a vision of faith and understanding, and as a country with a humanitarian calling, Panama will once again open its doors to global youth to provide a space for dialogue and an exchange of views on peace, tolerance and conflict prevention.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Panama's commitment to actively and constructively contributing to the youth, peace and security agenda in order to maximize the collective efforts that offer us the tools we need to prepare our youth for what is unquestionably a more globalized world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Sri Lanka.

Mr. Perera (Sri Lanka): I would first like to congratulate Peru on its assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate at a time when the world is facing growing threats to international peace and security. We would also like to thank Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, and Mr. Graeme Simpson, the lead author of the progress study (see S/2018/86), for their briefings.

Sri Lanka acknowledges the Council's landmark resolution 2250 (2015) on youth and welcomes the progress study on youth, peace and security that it mandates. It is a valuable framework for integrating our young people into our collective efforts to preserve international peace and security.

Today we live in a world that is overwhelmingly young, one in which 46 per cent of its people are under 24 years old. Migration and refugee movements, among other things, have contributed to a youth bulge and fast-changing demographics. That is a cause not for panic but for quick action and hope. Rather than viewing it as essentially a problem, we should recognize its potential. It provides a reason for the international community to renew its commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We must aggressively attack the underlying reasons why some young people become vulnerable to the violent narratives of extremists. Economic deprivation; systemic injustice and bias due to racial, religious and other prejudices; feelings of helplessness and hopelessness in an unfair social justice system; an unwelcoming society that seeks to exclude and label — all of these are breeding grounds for disgruntled, sullen youth. If we take away hope and opportunity within the system, Jihadi John will begin to look like an attractive option.

From the Arab Spring to the March for Our Lives movement, it has been young people who have energized the people, inspired action, held politicians accountable and spoken up for democracy, equality and justice. We must provide them with an environment that is as welcoming and a tool set that is as effective as possible so that they can live their best selves to their full potential.

Let me turn now to my own country and our efforts to empower young people in the context of the five pillars of resolution 2250 (2015) — participation, protection, prevention, partnerships, disengagement and reintegration.

First, in the context of this debate, let me say that Sri Lanka is faced not with a youth bulge, but with a rapidly ageing population. While Sri Lanka stands out as one of the success stories of considerable advancements in human development in South Asia, that brings its own economic and social challenges. Early investments in health and education have resulted in significant reductions in infant mortality rates, increases in life expectancy and decreased fertility rates. Those achievements have influenced Sri Lanka's demographic cycle. By 2041, one out of every four persons is expected to be an elderly person, making Sri Lankans the oldest population in South Asia.

International labour migration, largely concentrated among groups of young adult of working age, has increased during the past three decades, reducing the proportion of the working-age population in the country. Because of the extent of youth migration, the proportion of the elderly in the population has increased. For us, therefore, our young people are precious and indispensable to our success.

As a country that had, until 2009, suffered under the oppressive yoke of terrorism for nearly three decades, including two youth insurrections, Sri Lanka

understands the challenges of addressing the issue. Two insurrections in the 1970s and 1980s led to sweeping social and political reform, including the setting-up of a youth commission, the enactment of land reform laws and the establishment of a national youth council. Since 2015, following the devastating conflict, we have been embarked on implementing a reconciliation and transformative justice mechanism in order to ensure prevention and non-recurrence, along the lines of the resolution 2250 (2015).

Sri Lanka has focused on a comprehensive and responsive rehabilitation and reintegration programme for over 12,000 ex-combatants who surrendered to the security forces, including 594 child combatants, at the conclusion of the conflict in May 2009. The strategies and activities included improving their physical and mental state by spiritual, sociophysiological, personality and leadership training targeted to suit job opportunities. Apart from ex-combatants who directly surrendered, over 2,000 ex-combatants who had been arrested for their direct involvement in terrorist activities underwent voluntary rehabilitation in lieu of prosecution.

We have sought to include our young people and other stakeholders in building a post-conflict reconciliation and peacebuilding mechanism to ensure ownership and control of their futures. A national consultative task force — entirely driven by civil society and operating under the four pillars of truth, justice, reconciliation and non-recurrence — consulted with youth leaders, women, community leaders and others from all over the country in order to seek their views in establishing a comprehensive reconciliation mechanism. Sri Lanka also established a national policy on reconciliation in 2016, coordinated comprehensive district-level development plans for former conflict affected areas and launched interfaith, arts and culture programmes.

We established the Office of National Unity and Reconciliation as the implementing body for those programmes. Among a range of activities, the Office of National Unity and Reconciliation works on educational sector reform to incorporate national unity and reconciliation as a pillar within the education sector with a view to instilling in our children the importance of plurality. Those reforms include the twinning of schools, student-teacher exchanges, an examination of school textbooks to replace potentially inflammatory material and stereotypes, and the introduction of a guidebook on the rights and responsibilities of children. We have also introduced psychosocial programmes for those who have been traumatized. The Office of National Unity and Reconciliation provides training to leaders and clergy of various religions in peacebuilding with a view to using them as early-warning mechanisms to defuse potential conflict situations.

Sri Lanka is also on the cusp of introducing a comprehensive social and emotional learning programme for three- to five-year-olds in its preschools island-wide. The programme seeks to adopt a curriculum mediating all aspects of experiential, social and emotional learning in order to end discriminatory mindsets at a very early age and the cycle of violence. It seeks to change the mindsets and attitudes of children during their formative years through value-based education, activity, play and sports as a compulsory new subject. As a country recovering from conflict, we remain convinced that the only way to heal the wounds of division and sustain peace is by inculcating the values of empathy, oneness, inclusion, forgiveness, compassion and love in our children while they are young and open to change. One of the best ways to achieve that is through the universal language of sport and play.

Education remains one of the key preventive measures, and Sri Lanka has recognized the importance of developing youth skills. In that regard, we took the initiative to declare 15 July as World Youth Skills Day. General Assembly resolution 69/145, recognizing World Youth Skills Day, received the overwhelming support of the General Assembly. In conclusion, Sri Lanka believes that our children and youth are not only our future, but also our present. We see them as our greatest asset on our path to a better, peaceful and more secure world.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of El Salvador.

Mr. Escalante Hasbún (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, we would like to thank you, Mr. President, and Peru for convening this open debate. We also welcome the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, as well as the special guests at this meeting, for their briefings this morning.

My country, as everyone knows, has a historic commitment to youth after having lived through a 12-year armed conflict. Now, 26 years later, Salvadoran youth have become important agents of change in the post-conflict stage and in building a culture of peace.

One of the key features of the population of my country is that it is mostly young, with 63.7 per cent under 30-years old.

In order to benefit from that demographic boom and offer new prospects to our youth, El Salvador must address violence and insecurity as two of the main challenges facing them, and integrate all relevant actors into the efforts undertaken to that end. We know that challenges remain, but we are committed to the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015) to bridge the gaps left by the armed conflict in our country and to build an inclusive society in which young people play a fundamental role in decision-making and in building a culture of peace. That is why our national youth policy categorizes our youth in three groups: as an at-risk group, as subjects of the law and as strategic actors in development. That policy seeks to carry out three main processes, namely, developing their identity and autonomy; improving their social integration and civic engagement; and promoting social cohesion and a sense of belonging.

As we will also emphasize tomorrow at the General Assembly high-level meeting on peacebuilding and sustainable peace, for my delegation, peacebuilding is not only a transitory stage, but also an ongoing endeavour, since it implies not only the cessation of armed conflict, but also the construction of public institutions and the development of a civic consciousness that provides a firm foundation. That task consists of prioritizing cases of widespread violence in society. In that context, the Peacebuilding Commission has the responsibility to adopt a broader and more inclusive approach, while preserving the most urgent cases as priority.

Likewise, we stress the need for the peaceful and constructive engagement of youth, especially young women, from the earliest stages of prevention, crisis resolution and peacebuilding. In that regard, we take note of the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86), and we agree with its findings regarding the role of the media in forming stereotypes among young people. Unfortunately, the negative actions that certain young people take are always highlighted and the coverage of positive actions is left aside.

Similarly, we stress that youth, peace and security cannot be disassociated from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. From today's perspective relating to sustainable development and its link with youth, peace and security agenda, I recall that, in 2016, my country was selected by the United Nations system for the accelerated implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and we are one of seven countries that participate in the pilot project for the implementation of SDG 16 targets and indicators to achieve peace, justice and strong institutions.

We also call attention to the fact that, at the national level, we are currently sponsoring an initiative to move forward our national action plan for the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015). In September of 2017, youth organizations, together with my country's Government and in conjunction with the United Nations Population Fund and Interpeace, established a focus group on resolution 2250 (2015) and a working group on SDG 16 and that resolution, aimed at discussing the pillars set out in the resolution and interpreting it within the context of our national reality so as to advance towards the development of a national action plan for the implementation of resolution 2250 (2015).

In conclusion, my delegation affirms its commitment to maintaining its support for the achievements of the goals set forth in resolution 2250 (2015) and for the establishment of mechanisms working in complementarity with the national action plan towards the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, which advocates for strengthening the capacities and participation of young women.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Guatemala.

Mr. Skinner-Klee Arenales (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Let me to commend your delegation, Sir, for convening this open debate, as well as for the concept note before us (S/2018/324, annex), which contains valuable information for guiding this debate. We are also grateful to those who delivered statements before us.

Experience shows that armed conflicts and humanitarian crises put populations at risk, in particular young people, who are the most vulnerable and consequently the most victimized. In recent years, however, we have come to see that young people's participation is an essential element of the process of conflict resolution, which positively influences the work of peacebuilding, although it also pains us to see how young people have been instrumentalized for abject purposes and ideological causes that are diametrically opposed to their well-being. It is therefore necessary,

we believe, to underscore the fact that work must be stepped up to enable young people to assume leadership roles and, through education, integration and political participation, to avoid becoming involved in violent extremism. Accordingly, Guatemala holds resolution 2250 (2015) in high regard, given that young people make up a majority of its population.

The Security Council has hardly turned a blind eye to the leadership roles that young people must play, as evinced in resolution 2250 (2015), based on the premise that, if we fail to ensure their safety, education and comprehensive development, young people will be unable to reach the level of inclusion necessary to strengthen their capacities and, consequently, to make their contribution to peace and human rights. My delegation acknowledges the importance of resolution 2250 (2015) as it defers to the guidelines and recommendations of the Peacebuilding Commission on how to ensure young people's participation during and after armed conflict within the context of peacebuilding strategies. We have witnessed how, in various regions, young people have been drivers of change for social transformation, while directly affecting their communities and creating new inclusive models of social development.

The links connecting youth, peace and security are inextricably tied to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; hence the important relevance of the independent progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86) for which we are grateful to Mr. Simpson and his team. Although the world has made significant progress in making young women and men visible as strategic development stakeholders, a gap remains between formal acknowledgement of such ownership and effectively putting it into action on the ground. We therefore consider it absolutely vital to prioritize investment in the education, health and well-being of young people so as to provide them with comprehensive services without discrimination or any form of sectarianism. In that regard, we underscore the fact that States must ensure the representative and inclusive political participation of youth, which will allow that group to position itself at the centre of development, thereby creating broad consensuses that will lead to optimum levels of prosperity for the development of citizens, as well as young people.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms its firm commitment to promoting a culture of preventing armed conflicts as a means of addressing interrelated challenges of security and development, as well as strengthening the capacities of the United Nations to prevent armed conflicts. In specific post-conflict situations, youth has always been a vital and positive driver of helpful changes. In that regard, it is important that we ask ourselves if we are fulfilling the founding promise of the Organization, which is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, or if that is merely a rhetorical flourish. As responsible actors within the international system, we are called on to join efforts to build and maintain peace, thereby enabling future generations to learn to live within a culture of tolerance and respect — while considering lessons learned, especially those of the two World Wars, so that such a conflagration shall never again destroy the future of generations to come.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. Saleh Azzam (Lebanon): Allow me at the outset to express my delegation's appreciation for the remarkable efforts made by the Peruvian presidency, and your able leadership of the Council, Sir, throughout the month of April. I also thank you for convening this important open debate, your team for the concept note (S/2018/324, annex), and the briefers for their pertinent presentations.

This debate is of particular importance not only to Lebanon, but to the Arab region as a whole. Approximately 60 per cent of the population of our region is under 25 years of age, thereby making it one of the most youthful regions in the world. Yet, quite unfortunately, it is also a region where optimism and zeal are waning among young people. Mounting political frustration, lack of economic opportunities and diverse social challenges are, regrettably, depriving youth of the spark of hope.

In Lebanon, despite the Government's dedicated efforts to address pressing economic challenges, the overall impact of the lack of economic opportunities on youth is tangible. These have also been exacerbated by the economic repercussions of the Syrian displacement situation. As of August 2017, the unemployment rate stood at 25 per cent, with unemployment among young people — those under 25 years of age — at 37 per cent. Although approximately 35,000 young people graduate from universities annually, only 5,000 jobs are found. That is only one job for every seven graduates. The numbers are telling and reflect certain social repercussions of that economic challenge, particularly

in the increasing figures of migration to other countries to seek jobs.

Among youth, the lack of opportunity and hope can be a recipe for disaster. One expectable, albeit worrisome by-product of economic, social and political frustrations is the desperate resort to radical ideas and beliefs, which are, in certain cases, conducive to violent extremism. We therefore wonder what factors could promote and support young people's active involvement in building peace, thereby preventing violence and contributing to positive social cohesion.

To begin with, national Governments should uphold their share of the responsibility. The central role of youth in peacebuilding and sustainable development needs to be recognized and integrated into relevant policymaking. With regard to Lebanon, I am glad to highlight the National Youth Policy, which was endorsed by the Lebanese Government in 2012. That policy was a key milestone in our national efforts to empower youth and address their concerns. The final outcome was the fruit of the joint efforts of young women and men from civil society organizations, political parties, universities and high schools, and of relevant ministries, in particular the Ministry of Youth and Sports, as well as United Nations agencies.

Adjacently, civil society shoulders a considerable responsibility with regard to youth empowerment and its ultimate contribution to peace and security. Social media also offer youth a platform to express its hopes, fears and political, economic and social grievances. In that respect, Lebanon boasts a vibrant and powerful civil society and an open press and social media space in which youth-led communities are particularly active. These are opening doors for youth to have a growing and impactful presence in the public sphere. The ongoing parliamentary electoral process testifies to that impactful presence as we are witnessing an unprecedented level of participation and involvement of young men and women, including civil society activists, in various aspects of the process.

Terrorism and the violent extremism conducive to it are among the most alarming threats to international peace and security today. Young women and men are present on the different sides of this global challenge. They are not only victims and perpetrators, but also solution providers. It is imperative that youth become the centre both of national counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism strategies, but also of international endeavours on those two interrelated subjects.

During the negotiations over the biennial resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in June 2016, Lebanon was one of the leading countries seeking to include in the text references to the decisive role of youth in the prevention of terrorism, in particular through education. Education is without a doubt a tool of immense importance. It becomes even more so when it instils the values of openness and tolerance, and promotes critical thinking.

I wish to conclude by taking this opportunity to inform the Council that, on 27 March, the Lebanese Government officially endorsed Lebanon's national strategy for preventing violent extremism. Youth empowerment is one of the nine core pillars of the strategy.

The late United States President Herbert Hoover famously said: "Older men declare war. But it is youth that must fight and die". If young people are enabled to play their well-deserved role in decision-making, if they are provided the chance to have their say on matters of peace and security, a safer, more peaceful world is more likely to emerge, ascend and prosper.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): Let me join others in sincerely commending you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate on youth, peace and security. This particular open debate comes on the heels of the equally important one on women and peace and security, which convened about a week ago (see S/PV.8234). Botswana heartily welcomes your continued engagement on this issue and looks forward to a debate that will contribute to global development, international peace and security, and global partnership, particularly as it relates to the youth who constitute the majority of the world's population.

We also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for presenting his comprehensive report (see S/2018/86), on the progress study of youth's contributions to peace processes and conflict resolution.

Botswana aligns itself with the statements delivered earlier by the representatives of Mali, on behalf of the Group of African States, and Indonesia, on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries.

The global environment continues to experience many challenges, some totally unprecedented. This has placed an enormous burden on Member States, as well as on regional, subregional and international organizations, to deliver on the very purpose and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. It is only through collective efforts that the goals we all aspire to for the betterment of humankind and of the future we want can stand a chance of being realized.

Practically all the speakers before us have alluded to the fact that the fast-evolving challenges confronting the world today continue to grow in both scope and magnitude. Their sheer enormity threatens the security of our planet and even the existence of the human race. Botswana is not, however, convinced that these challenges are beyond our collective capability, nor are they insurmountable. Since its inception in 1945, the United Nations has strived to provide a platform for nations to work together in addressing the various challenges we continue to face, and it is proper to say that notable progress has been achieved, particularly in the maintenance of international peace and security.

We are glad to know that since the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015), there has been a series of worldwide consultations on the engagement of children and young people in peacebuilding activities. The adoption of the resolution was the first step of the United Nations in recognizing the important role young people play in preventing conflicts and sustaining peace. It is in itself a groundbreaking and historic moment for the United Nations, which specifically addresses the topic of youth from an international peace and security perspective.

This is also an opportune time for Member States to discuss not only the progress achieved in the two years since the adoption of the resolution, but to also engage on how we hope and plan to ensure that the goals and principles espoused in the Secretary-General's report, which was presented this morning, can be aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Secretary-General's report identifies five priority areas for action in pursuit of efforts to promote youth as agents of peace and security, and invariably see their lives improve.

Education plays the dual role of building competencies for social cohesion and civic engagement, while also developing skills for economic engagement. It is an extremely important undertaking as it relates to youth empowerment. I must emphasize the importance of partnerships in that regard.

Partnerships in peacebuilding are essential. Although they are often considered from the perspective of preventing violent extremism, partnerships with young people facilitate their aspirations, as they are engaged meaningfully as partners in implementing policies, rather than as onlookers.

Like other Member States that have taken the floor before us, Botswana has also made significant strides on the above key pillars and is thus contributing to the advancement and empowerment of youth, although we still face challenges and constraints. We take special pride in having established a ministry responsible for young people — the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture, way back in 2007. A department solely dedicated to youth affairs has also been established alongside the Botswana National Youth Council, which acts as an umbrella for all registered independent youth organizations in Botswana and through which financial support and grants are made available to those youth organizations.

Obviously, more needs to be done in this area and, like many other nations across the world, we are also concerned about what previous speakers have referred to as the youth bulge, which is educated, unemployed and very vulnerable. The number of youth graduates in our country has grown drastically over the past couple of years, exceeding the Government's capacity to provide employment for them. It is in that light that the Government of Botswana has stepped up efforts to attract foreign direct investment so as to facilitate job creation for these young people.

My delegation holds firm in the belief that the recommendations and findings of the study that the Secretary-General shared with the Council this morning will help inform the national policies of United Nations Member States on how young people can contribute to peace processes and conflict resolution. Africa needs to seize upon the demographic dividend arising from the youth bulge in its population in order to enable young people to constructively contribute to Africa's development, as well to peace and security. The youth bulge is, thus, a resource to be harnessed.

The time has come for us to partner with young people and to be innovative, creative and forward-thinking in order to address some of the challenges that we face.

The Secretary-General's report has drawn our attention to the most critical concerns of our youth and recommends that we engage youth as partners in development and policymaking. Again, in terms of resolution 2250 (2015), the role of young people in building cohesive societies can no longer be overlooked. Their creative and innovative ideas need to be put to good use for the benefit of their countries.

In conclusion, let me underscore the point that young people throughout the world need a conducive environment in which to develop and thrive. They need an environment that sees them as agents of change and as contributors and partners in development. This body can contribute to that process.

Let me in concluding make a request: perhaps, Mr. President, you should require that Member States present progress reports to this body on their implementation of resolution 2250 (2015) so that we can be informed of the efforts they are making to promote the involvement of young people in development and in decision-making on issues that affect them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Observer of the International Organization of the Francophonie.

Mrs. Saidane (*spoke in French*): Allow me to begin by thanking the Peruvian presidency for having convened today's debate on an issue of critical importance for the advancement of our collective aspirations vis-à-vis international peace and security. We hope that the Council will consistently follow up on the youth, peace and security agenda. Council, I wish also to thank all of those who spoke this morning, as their input makes it possible for all our debates on this issue to be increasingly well-informed and detailed.

More than two years have elapsed since the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015), which represented an unprecedented acknowledgement of the urgent need to mobilize young people in the promotion of peace and security, reaffirming the fact that without young people nothing is possible, nothing can be envisaged and nothing can be achieved.

The International Organization of the Francophonie (IOF), which currently has 84 member States and Governments, acknowledges young people as actors critical to the success of its efforts in all areas. Based on this certainty, in 2014 the IOF, at its fifteenth summit of Heads of State and Government, held in Dakar, focused on women and young people in Francophone regions and their role in peace and development. In acknowledgement of the 270 million young people in Francophone areas, the organization has since 2014 been committed to including them in all its bodies at all levels. The 2014 summit gave rise to the IOF's youth strategy, which hinges on an inclusive approach based on human rights.

I wish to focus on all consultations conducted by the organization not only with its youth networks but also with its member States and to share with the Council some aspects of our efforts on the basis of two core premises.

The first concerns the call made by young people today for us to question some of our certainties. Indeed, it is evident that young men and women represent the majority of the population and that it is we, those above age 35, who are now in the minority. Yet we continue to expect the majority to adapt to the demands of the minority without even including it in a dialogue on the necessary adjustments. This is especially true for mediation and crisis-exit processes, which, with a few exceptions, rarely welcome young people. Not only that, what we are in effect asking of them is that they get on a speeding train without ever considering how fast it is going.

The second premise relates to one of the points that the study on young people, peace and security specifically underlines, something that we welcome. We need to move away from simplistic stereotypes that view young people only as a high-risk, irresponsible and potentially violent group, even though the vast majority of young people wish only to contribute positively to peace, security and development, and have already been doing so.

I wish here to discuss some of the efforts undertaken by the IOF to forge a robust partnership with and for young people that is aimed at building peace within the French-speaking community, which has by no means been spared conflicts and violence.

First, with respect to inclusion and participation, our efforts are not limited to systematically including young people in decision-making processes and bodies; the aim is also to give them a voice, through, for instance, the Free Together campaign. In its first year the campaign, launched in 2016 on social networks, mobilized more than 5,000 young people in the French-speaking community in the context of

an initiative crafted by young people and focusing on the revalorization of coexistence, respect and the engagement of young people in public life. These same young men and women are also continuing to make contributions in the framework of the Francophone network for the prevention of radicalization currently being set up, as well as in the context of the national "Free Together" initiatives, specifically in Côte d'Ivoire and Benin, in partnership with the national authorities.

Furthermore, convinced that it is more important than ever to work to reconcile young people and decision-makers and to create the climate of mutual trust that is critical for dialogue, the IOF has harnessed its capacities in the area of advocacy, political mediation at the highest level and technical partnership with its member States in order to contribute to the maintenance of the rule of law, which protects young people, their voice and their participation.

The United Nations Development Programme, which in 2017 carried out a study on factors contributing to violent radicalization in the Sahel region, stressed the fact that one of the triggers of such violence was without a doubt State violence against citizens, and this aspect must remain at the heart of our concerns.

In addition to being guarantors of coexistence, young people, as has been stressed repeatedly today, are the economic actors of today and tomorrow. Given that the economic integration of young men and women is a critical component of their contribution to the building of peaceful societies, the IOF has adopted an economic and digital strategy through which it mobilizes funds for the support of innovation and entrepreneurship for young project leaders.

As education remains the cornerstone of young people's involvement, the IOF also supports the development of educational and vocational training policies, through, inter alia, the Institute of the Francophonie for Education and Training, based in Dakar, as well as the Francophone University Association, which includes more than 800 institutions of higher education.

Lastly, the IOF focuses on the mobilization of efforts in the areas of integrated cooperation and of sustainable, inclusive and responsible human development. The task is so urgent and the challenge of such magnitude that no country or organization can achieve it alone; hence the importance of today's debate. Because all national and international actors must act hand in hand with and for young people, an alliance was created between the IOF, the Commonwealth, the Ibero-American General Secretariat and the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries, which together represent 167 States and 61 per cent of the world's population. That alliance led to a call for universal humanism, launched jointly by the four women at the helm of those organizations, and to an action plan in which youth is acknowledged as a key actor in the stability of societies and in the establishment of the social cohesion necessary for peace and security.

I wish to conclude by focusing on that call, which is part and parcel of the quest to better align the efforts of the various relevant organizations and existing mechanisms, and to stress that we already have numerous opportunities at our disposal to systematically integrate young people into decision-making processes, as they are already organized enough to be credible interlocutors. We must accept being called into question; that is the aim of our present and future efforts.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

Mr. Grant (Canada) (*spoke in French*): The youth, peace and security agenda is about transforming systems that lead to the exclusion of young people and engaging youth in all aspects of social, economic and political life. It requires targeted funding and targeted programming and, above all, giving young people the opportunity, capacity and access to be leaders in their communities, as well as at the national and international levels.

How to do that is a challenge that every country faces. This agenda is universal. As the independent progress study on youth, peace and security so well illustrates, it lies at the heart of all of our prevention efforts, whether we are talking about preventing violent conflicts, violent extremism or violent crime.

To that end, Canada welcomes the progress study and is proud to have supported its innovative and participatory research process. We were also pleased that Canadian youth were able to discuss and validate its emerging recommendations last fall on the margins of the Vancouver Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial. We believe that the progress study will make an important contribution to the discussions we will be having this week on building and sustaining peace. As the recently launched United Nations-World Bank "Pathways for Peace" report recommends, managing youth's unmet

aspirations and their inclusion in society is a critical component of any measures to prevent violent conflicts.

(*spoke in English*)

As we collectively consider the recommendations of the progress study, Canada would like to highlight a number of key points.

First, there is genuine synergy between the youth, peace and security agenda and the women and peace and security agenda. Canada is implementing a feminist foreign policy with a strong focus on women and peace and security. Canada's second national action plan on women and peace and security provides a framework for a cohesive whole-of-Government approach to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all peace and security efforts. Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are also driving our feminist international assistance policy, which includes the need to engage men and boys.

Secondly, we recognize that some of the most important work is being done by civil society at the grass-roots and local levels. Too often the work of such organizations is unrecognized, while our interventions target processes led by capital-based actors.

Through our new Women's Voice and Leadership Programme, Canada will allocate $150 million over five years to respond to the needs of local women's organizations in developing countries that are working to advance the rights of women and girls and promote gender equality. We hope that there are lessons here for how we can support youth leadership and participation as well.

Thirdly, as outlined in the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, which Canada strongly supports, engaging youth and making them part of the response to violent extremism is crucial. Youth, predominantly affected by violent extremism, can play an important role in identifying solutions, supporting communities and building resilience to this threat.

Fourthly, when we talk about youth, peace and security, we must not forget about child protection, including preventing the recruitment of children in the peacekeeping context. As many here know, Canada developed the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers last fall. This initiative seeks to identify early-warning signs, take action to end recruitment and promote the reporting of abuses and grave violations against children. Since then, the Vancouver Principles have been endorsed by 63 Member States. In the coming years, Canada will convene the endorsing States, the United Nations and members of the child- protection community to develop practical implementation guidance for these principles.

Finally, responsibility for taking this agenda forward ultimately rests with Member States, but the United Nations has an important role to play. We believe that the United Nations and Member States can do more to facilitate young people's meaningful participation in peace negotiations and peacebuilding processes, ensure the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data related to youth, peace and security, and put in place mechanisms for meaningful consultation and the engagement of young people. We also believe that, as with the women and peace and security agenda, the Council should mandate regular reporting from the Secretary-General on youth, peace and security, and ensure that young people's participation is included in Security Council mandates.

Canada will continue to support this important agenda through our own domestic and international policies, and we stand ready to support the work of the United Nations in implementing the progress study.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Uzbekistan.

Mr. Ibragimov (Uzbekistan): Mr. President, I wish to thank you for having convened this open debate on maintaining international peace and security through promoting and protecting youth rights, which has become one of the key issues on the United Nations agenda. I wish to take this opportunity to inform the Council about the latest developments in Uzbekistan in this area.

For the past year and a half in Uzbekistan, under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, very dynamic processes of societal transformation including the promotion of youth rights, have been observed. The Government has been taking bold steps towards further expanding reforms in all fields, with the aim of building a democratic State and a just society guided by a simple principle: that human interests come first.

Today the world's youth population has already reached almost 2 billion people, and the planet's future and well-being depend on what kind of people

our children will grow up to be. The Government of Uzbekistan therefore attaches great importance to youth-related issues. We in Uzbekistan have enacted a national law on the youth policy of the State, which defines the legal framework and guidelines for the formation and implementation of our youth policy, with a view to strengthening the role of the public, especially non-governmental organizations, local authorities and the media, in implementing that policy. We also overhauled the youth movement by creating the Union of Youth of Uzbekistan, which is now more actively involved in the socio-political life of the country.

An effective youth policy is particularly important nowadays, at a time when terrorist threats and the radicalization of young people are widespread across the globe. As research shows, most crimes linked with extremist activity and violence are committed by people under the age of 30.

In this regard, today it is extremely important to fight for the hearts and minds of young people by providing them with the conditions necessary for self-realization and creating a barrier against the spread of the virus of the ideology of violence. For that reason, we in Uzbekistan believe that it is crucial to advance multilateral cooperation in the sphere of social support for youth by protecting their rights and interests.

This June, Uzbekistan, in collaboration with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, will host an international conference on the role of youth in preventing and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, which will address the following key issues: understanding the nature of violent extremism and radicalization leading to terrorism; exchanging opinions on effective strategies to prevent youth from falling prey to radical ideologies; identifying needs and opportunities in terms of implementing specific actions by States and civil society for preventing the spread of radical ideology among youth, while ensuring respect for human rights; and sharing positive experiences and lessons learned by Central Asian States on engaging youth in confronting violent extremism and radicalization. I am very pleased to note that the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, Ms. Wickramanayake, has been invited to that event, and we look forward to her participation.

During the seventy-second session of the General Assembly last September, the President of Uzbekistan proposed the development of a United Nations convention on the rights of youth, a unified international legal instrument aimed at developing and implementing a youth policy in a context of globalization and of the rapid development of information and communication technologies.

Given the importance of this issue, we in Uzbekistan hope that this initiative will receive the overwhelming support of all States Members of the United Nations, and we will jointly develop a draft of such a convention and make coherent efforts to bring it to fruition.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Luxembourg.

Mr. Braun (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): Allow me to thank the Peruvian presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's important debate, as well as all the speakers who have contributed to it.

My country fully aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union, but I would like to add a few comments from our national perspective.

We highly appreciate the quality of the independent progress study (see S/2018/86), and I wish to express my country's support for the recommendations set out therein and to express my thanks for the work of the Advisory Group of Experts and the secretariat established for the study, made up by the Peacebuilding Support Office and the United Nations Population Fund. I welcome the participatory and inclusive approach, which made it possible to reflect the views of young people around the world and to produce a study that reflects their reality.

We hope that the idea of a new Security Council resolution on youth, peace and security will become a reality. It is essential to complete the normative framework in this area and help reduce its fragmentation. The study before us today presents a unique opportunity for forward-looking strategic planning to accelerate the implementation of youth, peace and security programmes at all levels — national, regional and global.

Too many young people around the world have lost confidence in their Governments and in the international community. They feel excluded from governance systems, which creates a sense of injustice and of being left behind. We must fight against the stigmatization of young people, against prejudices and generalizations, facilitate their inclusion in processes of peacebuilding,

economic growth and social development, because young people are obviously our greatest treasure and the future of the planet.

In that context, in order to promote a coherent approach based on facts, Luxembourg is also in favour of an annual implementation report by the Secretary-General and the holding of annual open debates such as this in the Security Council. In order to ensure the legitimacy of these processes, the active participation of young peacemakers will also need to be ensured.

Whether it be at the national or international level, it is essential to build on young people's capacities for action and initiative by providing them with the means as well as the space necessary to enable them to build inclusive networks that lets them be heard and fight the structural obstacles that block their contribution to peace and security. Thereafter, they must be involved and recognized as equal partners, from the outset, in peace and security initiatives that concern them.

In all of the foregoing, young people can count on the ongoing commitment of my country.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Georgia.

Mr. Imnadze (Georgia): Let me first express my thanks to the Peruvian presidency for convening today's important debate on youth, peace and security. I would also like to express gratitude to the briefers for the reports and the study (see S/2018/86) presented to the Security Council.

The Georgian delegation aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the observer of the European Union. However, I would like to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

Young people represent the majority of the population in regions affected by wars and armed conflicts today. Yet the same young people can actively contribute to the peace and security of their communities and societies, and they do, but their work and voices need greater recognition and empowerment from our side. Examples of young people's contribution to the prevention of violent conflicts in different parts of the world speak to the potential of youth in promoting the concept of sustaining peace. To fully use their potential, we share the view cited in the progress study on the follow-up to resolution 2250 (2015), aimed at expanding youth participation and engagement.

Georgia considers youth to be one of the major driving forces in building and maintaining peace, as well as in conflict prevention and transformation processes. With that in mind, the Government of Georgia facilitates the engagement of youth in public diplomacy and confidence-building projects, including supporting access to quality education for conflict-affected youth. One of the latest peace initiatives of my Government — A Step to a Better Future — seeks to ease access for residents of the occupied regions of Georgia — Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia — to all levels of education, including vocational, available in the rest of the country. But for this endeavour to succeed, it is vital that the issue of flagrant violations of human rights of the population of the occupied regions be addressed, namely, restrictions of freedom of movement, kidnappings and killings. Just three weeks ago, in this very Chamber, I spoke about the most recent brutal example of this: the torture and killing of a young ethnic Georgian, Archil Tatunashvili (see S/PV.8218).

As long as Georgia's regions of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia remain under illegal foreign military occupation, my Government is being prevented from exercising its duties and responsibilities in the territories. The so-called law on the legal status of foreign citizens, introduced in 2016 by the occupation regimes, deprive local Georgians, including youth, from the possibility of fully participating in almost every aspect of life and from having a say in decision-making processes that directly affect them and their existence. Young people of ethnic Georgian origin in both regions are continuously deprived of basic human rights, including the right to freedom of movement and, most important, the right to receive education in their native language. They are targets of ethnically based violence and other forms of discrimination on ethnic grounds.

Against that backdrop, while we reaffirm our commitment to promoting the engagement of youth in decision-making processes, we call for the international community's increased attention in order to protect young people's rights in the occupied regions of Georgia and in other conflict-affected areas around the world as a matter of principle.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bangladesh.

Mr. Rahman (Bangladesh): We thank the Peruvian presidency of the Security Council for organizing

today's open debate. The voices of the young women from three different continents expressed the concerns and aspirations of their peers from across the world, including from the occupied Palestinian territories and Rakhine state.

Bangladesh welcomed the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) and eventually joined an informal group, Champions for Youth, in support of the youth, peace and security agenda. We consider the progress study (see S/2018/86) to be an important contribution to our discourse on a multidimensional agenda. The recommendations contained therein provide a comprehensive framework for promoting youth's potential role as the connective tissue in building and sustaining peace. It is crucial that young people all over the world be given an opportunity to realize their potential, building on the foundations set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Bangladesh is a fairly young country, with a large population of young people. Our nation is projected to harness the demographic dividend until 2035. We see our young men and women blazing their trails and leaving their footprints in almost all spheres of life. They often challenge the status quo and then help to chart a way forward through vibrant engagements and consultations. In so doing, they carry forward the proud legacy of youth leadership and participation through our nation's anti-colonial, independence and democratic struggles.

In recognition of our youth's seminal role in national peace and development, our Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has presented the vision of an inclusive, knowledge-driven economy under the slogan "A Digital Bangladesh". The vision aims to turn our young men and women into true agents of change by creating an enabling policy environment for them.

The updated national youth development policy adopted by our Government last year exemplifies our efforts to ascertain that no young person is left behind on our national development pathway. The policy upholds the provisions in our Constitution that ensure the rights, justice and equity for all young people, irrespective of gender, religion, caste, ethnicity or physical and mental abilities. Our Government remains committed to implementing an inclusive education policy that fosters critical thinking and a culture of peace among our young people and provides them with skill sets so that they can avail themselves of gainful employment opportunities at home and abroad.

Some of the key challenges faced by our youth are not necessarily unique to our context. Young men and women remain vulnerable to violent extremist narratives that can lead them astray, along the path of radicalization and terrorism. A considerable number of young people continue to fall prey to the motives and trade of organized criminal networks involved in trafficking on humans, drugs and arms. Traditional gender norms and practices disproportionately impact the potential of young women in particular.

Investment in youth makes eminent sense from all points of view. The case for financing youth-centric and youth-led initiatives is relevant not only for national authorities, but also for international development partners. The United Nations Peacebuilding Fund has demonstrated some useful precedents and results in that regard; it would be advisable for others to follow its lead.

Finally, I have personally seen, again and again, how young people among our troops and police continue to make a difference in United Nations peacekeeping operations. With the right environment and tools, young people can indeed prove to be a force to reckon with for conflict prevention and sustaining peace.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

Mr. Alshamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate on youth and peace and security, and for your continued support for youth issues. We also thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the lead author of the progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86) for their briefings.

Thanks to the leadership of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, resolution 2250 (2015) was adopted three years ago. Since then, significant efforts have been made to mainstream and highlight the positive work of young people in issues of peace and security. The United Arab Emirates welcomes the efforts that led to the progress study and commends its participatory approach. We find the study especially valuable in addressing long-held stereotypical beliefs and ideas concerning youth, and called for a more detailed and balanced approach when crafting policies related to young people.

The United Arab Emirates attaches great importance to developing a more comprehensive notion of peace, with a focus on the prevention of extremism and violence, while addressing the root causes of those issues. The study highlights the fact that in our quest for peace and security, young are indispensable allies. I would like to underscore the importance of the work of women and girls. We see that the agendas of youth, peace and security and of women and peace and security overlap in several areas. We therefore encourage building on former achievements.

Given the high number of young people who experience violence worldwide, as highlighted in the study, and against the backdrop of a region beset by conflict in recent years, the United Arab Emirates looks to its youth and the youth of the region to become positive drivers of peace. With strong political backing at the highest level, the United Arab Emirates has taken concrete steps nationally towards the meaningful inclusion of youth in decision-making processes. In 2016, the United Arab Emirates appointed a young female Minister of State for Youth Affairs. Since the appointment, several mechanisms and initiatives have been established, including the establishment of youth councils at every level of Government and the adoption of a national youth strategy. Those steps underpin an open policy of engagement that is the cornerstone of nurturing a peaceful and thriving society.

It is a common understanding that maintaining peace does not equate to simply ensuring the absence of violence. The United Arab Emirates is of the view that many of the challenges in our region cannot be solved without exploring the potential of young people and their active involvement. Our role as key policy-makers is to provide young people with the proper tools for success, such as good education, competitive job markets, equal opportunities and a nurturing environment, all of which, as the progress study illustrates, are among the most important factors of growth and peace.

In the United Arab Emirates, we take pride in supporting a tolerant and moderate model that provides alternatives to the cycles of extremism and violence in our region, with the aim of unlocking a talented, creative and innovative generation. At the heart of that model is a focus on prevention that underpins the stakes and investments that we have made in pursuing a policy of engaging and empowering youth. Building on that, the United Arab Emirates is home to such initiatives as the Arab Youth Centre, which provides opportunities for young Arab pioneers in different fields to mobilize their peers and take part in the sustainable development of their communities.

In conclusion, it is our duty as Member States to mainstream and embrace youth in our work at the United Nations as one of the solutions to reach our goals. The United Arab Emirates launched the Youth Delegate Programme in 2016, which involves Emirati youth in the official United Arab Emirates delegations that participate in General Assembly meetings, committees and relevant international forums. Convinced of the importance of such programmes, we encourage all States to launch programmes for youth delegates and enrich the work of the General Assembly with a youth perspective.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Monaco.

Ms. Picco (Monaco): More than half of the world's population is under the age of 30 and nearly 90 per cent of those young people live in the very areas where the United Nations deploys most of its peacekeeping missions. Graeme Simpson's progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86), mandated by resolution 2250 (2015), strikingly illuminates the long road that still has to be travelled to fully mobilize the tremendous asset that is young people, who are too often the victims of armed conflict and conspicuously absent from peace processes and conflict resolution.

I will limit myself to the remarkably innovative and ingenious action, highlighted in Graeme Simpson's study, of young people who use sport to deal with their suffering, foster their demobilization and facilitate their reintegration.

As the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes, sport has made a growing contribution to development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect, the empowerment of women and youth, individuals and communities, as well as health, education and social inclusion objectives.

The Group of Friends of Sport for Development and Peace, which Monaco has co-chaired since 2010 with Tunisia, promotes the unique tool that brings together communities and individuals — a tool that deserves further integration into strategies for both conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation and peacebuilding. The testimonies that we receive from the Group of Friends are unequivocal: sport is a simple and

effective vehicle for bridging social, religious and racial gaps and even for combating gender discrimination.

Founded in 2007 in Monaco by Olympic champion Joël Bouzou, the organization Peace and Sport enjoys the patronage of Prince Albert II. It supports programmes in five continents and benefits from a network of champions for peace. Sporting activities are particularly important on a day-to-day basis, because of crowding in camps for refugee and internally displaced persons, and for United Nations peacekeeping operations. That was demonstrated in 2017 in South Sudan with a volleyball competition, and more recently, in 2018, as part of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, where the Civil Affairs Division organized a football tournament to promote education and social cohesion.

The universal language of sport perfectly encapsulates the four 'P's of resolution 2250 (2015): participation, protection, prevention and partnerships. We must not underestimate the capacity of sport to contribute to curbing violence, restoring trust, re-establishing social ties, ensuring the reintegration of ex-combattants and supporting their physical and emotional recovery.

The recommendations in paragraph 60 of the study are particularly interesting. The investment of $1 per young person between today and 2025 — which will mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015) — would be a great symbolic success, all the more resounding if it young people are involved. We are fully confident that the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth will be able to assist us in achieving that.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Dominican Republic.

Mr. Cortorreal (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to congratulate the Security Council, under the presidency of Peru, for convening this first open debate since the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015), on youth, peace and security, as well as Mr. Simpson for presenting the progress study on the subject (see S/2018/86). We also extend our sincere thanks to the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the representative of civil society for sharing their important perspectives.

Resolution 2250 (2015) is a historic document and a point of reference for Member States to give a greater voice to young people in decision-making and to implement mechanisms that allow them to participate meaningfully in peace processes. The study not only places young people at the forefront of a dialogue that directly impacts them, but also serves as an inspiration for us to take advantage of the unique energy that they possess to fulfil the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, namely, Goal 16, on the promotion of peace and inclusive societies.

We must be careful when viewing young people only as perpetrators or victims of violence. Young people have a pivotal role in guaranteeing the success of efforts to maintain lasting peace, promote peacebuilding and achieve more equal and just societies. We must therefore guarantee their active and meaningful participation in that regard.

It is essential that we ensure respect for the law and the protection and full enjoyment of human rights, with greater attention given to the most vulnerable young people, with a view to prevention and the consolidation of peace. It is also urgent that we guarantee young people access to quality education and social protection, as well as economic empowerment.

We are pleased to see that the study addresses various types of violence. One of the most appalling types of violence is that perpetrated against women, affecting mainly young women, which is an evil that afflicts many countries of the world. In that regard, the Dominican Republic is working to train young people, primarily men, in the areas of analysis, prevention and eradication of violence against women.

Moreover, climate change threatens the peace and security of nations, from the hurricanes that beset our region, to drought, increasing temperatures and water scarcity, which contribute to social upheaval and violent conflict, thereby directly affecting the security and development prospects of young people around the world. In that vein, involving youth in creating awareness about climate change is essential if we are to respond immediately and effectively.

We must exercise caution when it comes to the dangerous narrative of exclusively highlighting programmes that support young people involved in conflict. We tend to forget to foster more programmes that favour young people who contribute to peacebuilding. Many organizations do not have enough funding to achieve their peace and security goals, which limits their work and the scope and impact of their projects. We need further alliances among young

people, Governments, civil society and the international community.

Gathering data is crucial, not only to be able to calculate exactly how many young people are exposed to different forms of violence or have their rights infringed, but also to be able to guide policies and programmes aimed at the empowerment and the well-being of our youth, primarily based on the five pillars of resolution 2250 (2015). We recognize that monitoring the progress made in implementing the resolution is fundamental, as with the women and peace and security agenda, through an annual report to analyse the implementation of the recommendations of the study.

The Dominican Republic plans to join the Security Council as a non-permanent member during the period 2019-2020, and those will be part of our priorities. We understand that we should not only address the youth, peace and security agenda in isolation or solely in open debates, but also in other discussions within the Council, the General Assembly and the United Nations system.

In conclusion, the Dominican Republic is fully committed to implementing the recommendations of the progress study pursuant to resolution 2250 (2015). We hope to have an opportunity as a Council member to continue working with the United Nations, Member States and civil society to advance the goals of the youth, peace and security agenda.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Edrees (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): First and foremost, I wish to thank the Peruvian presidency of the Security Council for convening this important debate. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth and the other briefers for providing us with valuable information.

Egypt has duly taken note of the Secretary-General's progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86) and its recommendations.

Egypt has a young population, with about 22 million people between the ages of 18 and 29, namely, 24 per cent of the total population. We believe that young people are the main driving force that societies need for development and progress, for avoiding wars and conflicts and for peacebuilding. For that reason, article 82 of our Constitution stipulates that the State guarantees the care of youth and must help them discover their talents and develop their cultural, scientific, psychological and physical abilities, including encouraging them to engage in group and volunteer activity and enabling them to take part in public life.

Egypt celebrated International Youth Day last August, under the slogan "The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". In that regard, Egypt hosted the World Youth Forum for the period from 4 to 11 November 2017, with more than 3,000 participants from all over the world, including Heads of State and Government, personal envoys, thinkers, public figures and academics, as well as the participation of research centres and private sector. The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme also participated in the forum representing the Secretary-General.

The Forum discussed aspects of the study prepared by the Secretary-General. It simulated five Security Council meetings on topics such as means to address the threats to world peace and security posed by terrorist organizations, irregular migration, challenges faced by states and immigrants, as well as the impact of conflict on peoples and nations, with the means to limit their danger on development and the youth.

Resolution 2250 (2015) represents the starting point for a legal framework for the youth, peace and security agenda. However, such a framework will bear fruit only if it is accompanied by a set of practical steps that will help to strengthen the role of youth and their participation in their societies, and protect them from extremism and conflict. In that context, I would like to make the following observations.

It is important to give young people economic and educational opportunities to break the vicious cycle of extremism and violence. We must include them in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals locally and internationally, and harness their innovative capacities in forming new international partnerships between States and international financing entities to spur economic activity and address post-conflict rebuilding. It is also important to acknowledge young people's needs and address the root causes of conflict. Moreover, we must safeguard and respect their national and cultural identities with a view to preventing them from sliding into extremism.

In his forthcoming report, the Secretary-General would be well-advised to especially focus on young

people in occupied Arab territories, as is noted briefly in the progress study. They are subjected to violations by the occupying Power when they stand up for their cause. We must also include young people in decision-making processes. To that end, we have launched a leadership programme that aims to build upon and mobilize their capacities to take decisions in governance, administration and public policy. Civil society organizations, especially those led by young people, also play an important role in preventing extremism.

Furthermore, it is also important to incorporate the gender dimension in all youth programmes through capacity-building, particularly of women and young people. Volunteer opportunities contribute to the development of young people's skills. In that regard, we commend the efforts undertaken by United Nations Volunteers. Media can also play an important role in raising awareness on a culture of peace and combating violent ideologies.

We reiterate the call of the World Youth Forum, held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, to establish an international electronic forum to develop strategies to tackle the challenges facing young people worldwide. The various international conferences throughout the world strengthen opportunities for dialogue among youth, but also between young people and their Governments, as well as with civil society and international organizations. In that regard, Egypt emphasizes the importance of holding the World Youth Forum in November of each year. We call on everybody to participate in the forum.

In conclusion, we acknowledge that there are many conflicts that draw in young people. They might spill beyond conflict zones and borders. The issue under consideration today is the first step to creating a practical framework to engage young people in working towards a more peaceful world. We must cooperate to counter the adverse consequences of an environment that pulls young people towards violence.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Portugal.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): I would like to commend the Peruvian presidency for convening today's open debate on youth, peace and security. Young people currently represent a majority of the populations in countries affected by conflict. As the largest generation ever, one-fourth of the world's population, the efforts of young people will be essential if we are to ensure effective responses to today's complex crises, prevent conflicts and sustainably prepare their countries for the future. Resolution 2250 (2015), which the Security Council adopted unanimously in December 2015, marked the beginning of a process that will secure a more relevant role for young people in the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security. We have translated it into Portuguese to ensure that the text is more widely known to relevant stakeholders and the general public.

As the progress study on youth, peace and security (see S/2018/86) clearly states, young people are already seeking ways to prevent violence and consolidate peace around the world. It is our responsibility to ensure that they are heard and recognized as true partners for peace. The study also indicates that for young women and men, peace and security depend on human rights-based protections and redress. Portugal fully agrees with that. Young people can be partners for peace only if their rights are fully respected, whether political, civil, social, economic or cultural.

Young people are often more vulnerable to violent extremism. They are also more prone to being recruited into extremist groups, partly owing to a sense of marginalization and social and economic exclusion. Ultimately, a lack of kinship and belonging leads to young people's alienation and disfranchisement, which in turn aggravates their vulnerability. That is exacerbated in our globalized societies by extremists and terrorists' growing use of information and communication technologies to incite, recruit, fund and plan terrorist acts, disseminating a false narrative of glory and a sense of empowerment, all of it just a computer click away.

We must therefore work to ensure that young people's human rights are fully respected and that they can be meaningful members of society. It is also important to ensure that they can participate meaningfully and inclusively in political life. In that regard, Portugal fully agrees with the progress study's recommendations on enhancing the capacity of youth organizations and recognizing youth leadership. For those purposes, we believe there is no greater tool than education. The full realization of the right to an education, including higher education, is crucial to achieving those goals and ensuring that young men and women are part of the solution rather than part of the problem. That is especially important in crisis situations. Portugal has been supporting the Global Platform for

Syrian Students, which is an excellent example of how the international community can work together to create opportunities for those affected by crisis and emergencies and ensure a future for their country and region. I would like to take this opportunity to call on all partners to support the Global Platform, as well as the recently launched Rapid Response Mechanism for Higher Education in Emergencies.

In conclusion, Portugal has always been a staunch supporter of the youth agenda at the United Nations and firmly believes that the World Programme of Action for Youth, established with the adoption by consensus of General Assembly resolution 50/81, 20 years ago, continues to offer an adequate response to the serious challenges faced by young populations, since it provides Member States with a blueprint for practical guidelines for national action and international support. Furthermore, Portugal has continuously and consistently encouraged the participation of young delegates in international events related to youth. In our view, investing in policies and programmes to create an enabling environment for young people to prosper, fulfil their potential, enjoy their human rights and engage as responsible social actors is a prerequisite for a successful collective strategy against the dissemination of violent extremism and for the maintenance of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Ms. Moutchou (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, my delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this open debate on youth, peace and security.

Today, a quarter of the world's population is under the age of 24. This is the largest generation of young people the world has ever seen. They are therefore decisive agents of social development and represent tremendous potential for sustainable development. The United Nations proclaimed 1985 as the International Youth Year, thereby laying the foundations for the global consideration of youth-related issues. Ten years later, the General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth, which offered practical guidelines to improve the situation of young people. For its part, resolution 2250 (2015) recognized for the first time the positive role played by young people in the promotion of lasting peace, defining them as important partners in global efforts to achieve peace and combat violent extremism.

As the world evolves, so do the issues facing young people, who today are bearing witness to a world where poverty goes hand in hand with the concentration of wealth, where ignorance exacerbates social tensions and where conflict causes them to doubt the promise of a better future. In the face of exclusion, lack of opportunities and unemployment, the ambitions of young people morph into frustrations that are exploited by criminal and extremist groups. We must bridge this gap exploited by the enemies of humanity, peace and development. The long-term solution to youth radicalization lies in building more inclusive, participatory and egalitarian societies.

It is in this spirit that Morocco has for years undertaken numerous commitments to young people, particularly by giving pride of place to youth in the Constitution of Morocco, calling on the public authorities to universalize the participation of young people in the Kingdom's socioeconomic, cultural and political development. We have adopted a quota for young people in Parliament, launched an integrated national strategy for youth for 2015-2030, and created a national institute for youth and democracy, a national youth documentation and information centre and an advisory council for youth, as called for by the Constitution, and other training and integration centres for young people. In Rabat, we have created the Union of Young African Parliamentarians, which fosters exchanges and cooperation among young parliamentarians on the African continent. We have set up a national initiative for human development, which, inter alia, focuses on the promotion of the well-being of all population groups, specifically young people.

We commemorate Youth Day, an annual event that highlights royal solicitude and provides an opportunity to appreciate the projects set up for young people and to take stock of the achievements and accomplishments made in the field of youth promotion. In March 2017, in the context of implementing resolution 2250 (2015), we held a national forum on young people facing violence, extremism and the promotion of peace and security, which was enshrined by the Bouznika appeal.

To conclude, allow me to emphasize the two following points. First, young people are often a preferred target of extremist rhetoric, which is anathema to coexistence and the culture of peace.

The establishment of sustained dialogue among young people on issues concerning youth, peace and security will allow them to strengthen their defences against hate speech, radicalization and extremism. Secondly, youth empowerment and participation in public life are key factors in the construction and development of peaceful societies. This requires us to seek new opportunities for the effective, structured and sustained participation of young people in all aspects of political, economic, social and cultural life, particularly through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Azerbaijan.

Ms. Mehdiyeva (Azerbaijan): Let me start by expressing our appreciation to the presidency of Peru for organizing this important open debate on youth, peace and security. It offers a timely occasion to reflect, ahead of tomorrow's high-level event of the General Assembly on peacebuilding and sustaining peace, on how best to involve youth in efforts towards that end. We note the progress study (see S/2018/86) prepared in response to resolution 2250 (2015), and look forward to its full version.

In conflict-stricken and fragile regions, young people are frequently disproportionately affected by violence, unemployment, lack of access to education and medical and social services. Young migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons are often trapped in conflict zones. Most of the casualties in armed conflicts are young men, while young women are at heightened risk of physical and sexual abuse. The negative stereotypes that depict young people as victims or perpetrators of conflict hinder their participation in peacebuilding processes. In this respect, we firmly believe that young men and women should be involved in the elaboration and implementation of youth policies, specifically those supporting youth peacebuilding interventions.

In the face of increasing global threats, prevention is the most effective strategy to protect our societies from armed conflicts and violent extremism. Only by tackling the underlying root causes can Governments prevent the spread of and eradicate these scourges. There is a strong need for soft strategies that identify and pre-emptively address radicalization and other factors that drive conflict. Young people are more susceptible to adopting extremist ideologies. In this regard, intercultural dialogue is a tangible instrument for promoting respect for diversity, pluralism and human rights among youth.

My country, with its tradition of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among ethnic communities and the three major religions, has successfully incorporated multiculturalism into State policy. Since the launch of the Baku process in 2008, it has become a key global platform for dialogue between people. Since 2011, the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue has been organized biannually by Azerbaijan. This initiative is recognized by the Secretary-General as a global platform for cross-cultural dialogue.

As the study points out, "peace and security are more than just the absence of violence" (*S/2018/86, para. 20*). Engaging young people in meaningful and transformative opportunities, supporting their personal progress and recognizing their role as agents of positive change is crucial in order to help them develop strong values and principles. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development pledges to leave no one behind. Including young people in all aspects of decision-making and fostering their participation in global processes will not only benefit the sustainable development of our societies, but will also give them a sense of purpose and identity. In this context, my country, Azerbaijan, has successfully carried out policies that support youth empowerment and benefit their economic and social integration. The National Youth Foundation and the Ministry of Youth and Sports are the main State bodies responsible for the coordination and implementation of youth policies.

We actively encourage and promote international youth cooperation. In 2014, Azerbaijan hosted the first Global Forum on Youth Policies, jointly convened by the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, the United Nations Development Programme, UNESCO and the Council of Europe. The forum brought together over 700 participants from 165 countries and 115 Governments, thereby becoming the biggest conference ever to be held exclusively on youth policies. In 2017, the thirteenth World Scout Youth Forum and the forty-first World Scout Conference were held in Azerbaijan under the theme "Together for positive change", with the participation of more than 1,500 delegates from 151 national Scout organizations.

Volunteering is another powerful tool for positive youth participation. By engaging youth in various

large-scale international events, Azerbaijan has provided the latter with many volunteer opportunities. The ASAN Volunteers Organization, a branch of the State agency for Government services to citizens of Azerbaijan, provides a venue for volunteers to prepare for future careers and develop a sense of community and social responsibility.

To conclude, let me reiterate that we are fully committed to supporting young people at both the national and international levels and to encouraging youth engagement initiatives.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Tunisia.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia): Allow me at the outset to thank the Peruvian presidency for convening this important open debate on youth, peace and security. In a world where both conflict and young populations are growing, it is easy to fall into the negative narrative relating young people to the problem, perceiving them as either the perpetrators or the victims of violence, and rarely as part of the solution.

However, this narrative is changing, as young people are now considered the missing piece in achieving and maintaining international peace and security. Since 2011, this has been the case in Tunisia, where young women and men decided to take matters into their own hands and peacefully changed the course of history in the country. The majority of young people around the world still face challenges that keep them from reaching their full potential. Member States, United Nations agencies and all relevant stakeholders need to cooperate and multiply their efforts in this regard.

First, it is our responsibility to create a conducive environment in which young women and men will thrive. This can be done only by listening and understanding young people and their needs through sustained mechanisms of interaction. Our focus should not be only on young people in conflict situations or on those who are already involved in peacebuilding. An inclusive representation of young people from different backgrounds and in different circumstances is our tool on the path towards conflict prevention.

Secondly, the role of youth in realizing peace and security should not be considered without recognizing the correlation between human rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Young women and men must be, first and foremost, perceived and treated as rights bearers. Their participation in peacebuilding processes cannot reach its full potential without enabling them to be effective stakeholders in society.

As Tunisians are only a few days away from completing a full cycle of democratic and free elections for the first time by electing their municipal representatives, a focus on the role of young people in this process has been reinforced. A system of youth quotas was adopted in the electoral law, ensuring a direct and equitable participation of young people all over the country.

Thirdly, we need to realize that the role of youth in peace and security is a cross-cutting issue that goes beyond the political process. We need to uncover the root causes of the challenges faced by young people, mainly their economic and social situations. Sustaining peace and security first requires the economic inclusion of young people in order to ensure their well-being and livelihood.

Finally, a focus on gender is key in order to allow young women to play their full, effective role in promoting and maintaining peace and security. As the perception of identity develops mainly during youth, we need to shape the concept of gender among young people by promoting respect, equality and inclusiveness. It is also important to provide young women with training opportunities to take an active part in peacebuilding. With the adoption of a new law on eliminating violence against women in July 2017, Tunisia is determined to achieve the goal of gender equality and to combat all forms of discrimination against women, particularly young women and girls.

With their energy, ability to adapt and innovative minds, youth could be mobilized as mediators, community mobilizers, humanitarian workers and peacebuilders. Their capacities need to be nurtured and supported. Today's open debate helps us to send a signal to young people around the world that their voices are heard and that their power as agents of change is recognized. Tunisia remains committed to continuing to work at the national, regional and international levels and with all relevant stakeholders — especially youth — to advance their rights and ensure the realization of their full capacity.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the representative of Bahrain.

Mr. Alrowaiei (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting on such a vital topic, shedding light on the progress achieved since the adoption of resolution 2550 (2015), the first Security Council resolution to focus on youth in the context of peace, security and sustainable development.

I would like also to thank Ms. Jayathma Wickramanayake, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth; Mr. Graeme Simpson, lead author of the progress study on youth and peace and security (see S/2018/86); and Ms. Sophia Pierre-Antoine, Member of the Advisory Council of the World Young Women's Christian Association, for their valuable briefings and for the progress study. We are thankful for the progress achieved since the adoption of the aforementioned resolution.

The Kingdom of Bahrain confirms the need to address the root causes of the exploitation and recruitment of youth to serve terrorist and extremist groups by empowering young people in all fields and involving them in the development process in their countries so as to use their potential in the service of their countries' construction and development.

The Kingdom of Bahrain believes in the importance of investing in youth. Our world has technological and scientific assets that would allow young people to become active and productive in their countries, particularly as this group accounts for 2 billion people — equivalent to one third of the world's population. We therefore recognize the importance of the role that youth can play in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals so that we can live in a world in which justice, tolerance and peace prevail.

We note that national initiatives focusing on youth allow institutions to eliminate stereotypes that have long linked young people to violence and extremism. At the national level, the Kingdom of Bahrain operationalized its national youth strategy in 2003, and last year the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs organized a Youth Forum on Peacebuilding to promote the potential of Bahrain's youth as peacemakers in the face of violence and terrorism. The Forum shed light on the concept of world peace, debated that concept from different perspectives and provided an opportunity to learn about the expertise and efforts of participating States and international organizations in the field of peacebuilding. It also promoted the culture of tolerance and moderation in society drew up a future blueprint to promote peace and fight terrorism.

The Kingdom of Bahrain realized the importance for Government organizations, private and public institutions, international organizations and individuals to participate in empowering youth. In cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme and the Economic and Social Council, it organized the King Hamad Award to empower young people to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. This is the first award of its kind in the region, aiming to incentivize sectors around the world to focus on youth and prioritize them in national programmes of action.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has also launched pioneering initiatives for youth around the world as a means of providing the necessary environments in which to share ideas and shed light on their creative initiatives. The Ministry for Youth and Sports Affairs also launched the global Nasser Bin Hamad Youth Creativity Award, in which young people from over 112 countries around the world participated. The award focuses on the creative achievements of young people in scientific and technological fields and promotes their participation in competitions.

The progress study on youth, peace and security, contained in the letter from the Secretary-General, refers to the fact that youth-led peace and security work is noticeably innovative and resourceful in using art, sport and media. I note that the Kingdom of Bahrain recently hosted the first Arab Conference on Sport, on the role of sport in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the Arab world. The Conference was organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme in the Kingdom and the International Council for Health, Physical Education and Sport, with emphasis on the role of sports as a gateway to peace.

In this context, we would also like to mention that the increased use of social media by young people is positive. Societies have become more open to each other and it has become easier to make new acquaintances and exchange ideas, concepts and experiences. Social media sites have become a bridge for dialogue on various topics and a tool allowing youths to participate freely in their countries and make their voices heard by officials in their own countries. It is therefore most necessary to preserve cyberspace as a

tool for the positive development of societies, and not to use it for destructive ideas.

In conclusion, the Kingdom of Bahrain will continue to pursue this approach in encouraging national and global initiatives in order to allow young people to play their due role in achieving sustainable peace and security. We shall also continue to work with the international community to share our best practices in this field.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.